

**COMPLETELY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,  
AN ALTERNATIVE TO NEO-LIBERAL GLOBALISATION**

**"Sustainable development" Workshop**

**Post meeting summary following the general meeting of the Socio-Economy of Solidarity Workshop  
at Findhorn**

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1 – Analysis and report

Human beings have undermined nature in many ways, to the point of breaking certain fundamental natural mechanisms; at the same time putting the whole human race in danger, increasing inequality between humans and depleting the natural resources available. Therefore an ethical debate has started up and the efficiency of the technique has been called into question.

The inequalities that exist throughout the planet have posed a problem in terms of growth. On one hand there is an absolute limit to the amount of natural resources that can be exploited and a level of pollution and waste that cannot be exceeded. On the other hand, there is the minimum amount of resources necessary for a dignified life. For Europe, it is essential to remain within these limits; but for the developing nations immersed in destitution, the problem is to grow enough to be able to exceed this minimum.

If sustainable development has been the object of a separate discussion, it is because it has a particularity, a question that has a dimension apart from the socio-economy; the main challenge faced by sustainable development is that of overloading the planet.

The trend for next few decades will be an increasing demand for energy and other natural resources, thus conflicting with the necessary sustainability of the earth's eco-system, which will insist these demands are cut in half during the same period. If there is not a significant reduction in the current flow of raw materials and energy, we will probably see, in the next few years, reduced food production *per capita*, reduced industrial production and energy use, set against an accelerated ecological deterioration.

There is no point in being concerned about the optimum nature of ecological sustainability if the political sustainability of the system, that must protect the same environment, is not guaranteed; at the same time there is no point in being concerned about perfect social justice if neither the survival of the earth's eco-system or the human species, is guaranteed. Looking for the best form of economic growth makes no sense, if this threatens catastrophe for the whole of humanity.

Any model of sustainable development has to satisfy the basic needs of the most disadvantaged populations – shelter, drinking water, food, sanitation and hygiene, energy, education, health, involvement in the decision making process; the adaptation of technologies and life styles has to be targeted towards the potentials and socio-economic and ecological particularities of each region, seeing to the internalisation of all costs, the economic valuing of waste and an exploitation of natural resources that respects the cycles of the eco-system. The challenge consists of integrating the principles of humanity, equity and responsibility into the concept of development.

Neo-liberal globalisation has given rise to a two-speed world society, with a minority that is rich, excessive and polluting and a majority that supplies cheap labour, based on under-consumption, leading to a competitive battle based on *social and ecological dumping*.

Excessive consumption, established as the ethical value, has intensified the destruction of natural resources, favouring the two billion consumers of the wealthiest nations, whose dynamic of production/consumption/waste feeds environmental destruction.

The social duality of humanity, with its dynamic of the “excessive consumption/under-consumption” dialectic has become the driving force of the massive migrations of the South towards the North and of the East towards the West. The inability of our opulent society (with its own tendency towards duality) to absorb those living on the margins of society, has given rise to pockets of the Fourth World in Europe and the United States. We cannot sustain a relentless growth in consumption, nor even maintain the present day levels of consumption. It is no longer viable to eradicate poverty in the world, by elevating the model of consumerism, with still more sustained economic growth, following the current industrial model, even if we deign to add a certain concern for the environment. We believe that it is not enough to call into question the logic that leads to a non-sustainable use of nature; we must challenge the social relations and world economic system which allows it to happen. We can advance certain hypothesis:

- 1) Globalisation is a new context; perhaps not in terms of trends but in terms of sudden change and intermittency of scale.
- 2) Sustainable development will be global or not at all.
- 3) For a sustainable socio-economic development for the most under-privileged peoples on the planet, development processes must be endogenous to the South; economic growth included, in numerous cases, which must be sustainable from the environmental point of view. But this has to be accompanied by a parallel decline (in production and consumption, not quality of life) in the North, in such a way as to enable sustainable development on a global scale.
- 4) New communication technologies have changed the systems and relationships of production, work and trade as much as the relationships between cultures, ideas and people. Bio-diversity, (in the wider sense and thus also including cultural bio-diversity), is in more danger than ever.
- 5) The nation state has allowed the economy to deregulate itself, and it is the “ Market ”, the *deus ex machina*, that has taken its place.
- 6) The structure of international institutions is based on, as the name suggests, nation states, leaving the global economy deregulated.
- 7) Proposals such as the elimination of foreign debt, the Tobin tax, reduction of working hours, the sustainability of production sectors, the exchange of technology and expertise, etc; all of which are based on the power of the nation state, are in direct contradiction with the previous statements.
- 8) For several centuries the North has been stripping the South of its human and natural resources, contributing to a huge ecological debt of the dominating North towards the people of the South. Sustainable development forces us to face the non-sustainable nature implicit in the behaviour of an industrialised civilisation dominated by the North and its model of neo-liberal globalisation.
- 9) Economic growth based on this sole method of neo-liberal thinking is neither socially, economically, ecologically nor politically sustainable

The impoverishment of the old model forces us to face an important question: How to satisfy human needs, preserve the future and well-being of future generations and, at the same time, protect the environment? The concept of a completely sustainable development, which integrates the many facets of the problem, allows this question to be answered.

The notion of sustainable development must be complete: that is to say that the development must be sustainable economically, ecologically, socially and politically, comprising an ethical dimension and a respect for cultural diversity.

Completely sustainable development assumes a re-examination of two concepts that until now have been fundamental to the modern notion of development: 1) the pseudo law of "market self-regulation"; institutional regulation of the market is intrinsically necessary and sustainable development must promote decentralised forms of development at the local level 2) the concept of "the insatiability of human beings" as fundamental to the modern construction of the idea of "needs"; a culturally sustainable idea of needs must put the idea of the richness of the "being" before the idea of the "having". The quality of life is not measured by the accumulation of economic goods and all attempts at sustainability start with a re-definition of human needs within the context of the idea of sufficiency, as well as the quality of social relationships between "subjects". We can link misery to an insufficiency of the existential (physiological and/or psychological) but poverty is always relative: we are poor in direct consequence of our unfulfilled aspirations. To attain sustainable production we must search, before anything, sustainable consumption, and this can only be based on a culture of sufficiency, not insatiability. Sustainable development is linked to ethical consumption and these two aspects characterise a profound cultural change, which in its turn assumes a wide-reaching social, economic, political, moral, cultural and spiritual revolution

All embracing sustainable development also assumes the re-examination of the central omission in the current idea of development: the role of women. Completely ignored and marginalized by the dominant model, women live in a situation marked by inequality and exclusion, confronted with the dominant economy, for which the act of producing, consuming and trading is only recognised on the express condition of submitting to the imperatives of chrematistic accountability. A new socio-economic model would demand that women take their place in society and the economic sphere on the basis of equality, independence and solidarity. The new model assumes an individual and collective vision of development that recognises equality among men and women; the spiritual, mental, physical and social dimensions of the person; the environmental dimension of the human race: an equitable development between the "centre" and the "margins", between North and South, between East and West and, finally, the respect for diversity in all its manifestations.

In particular, the new model must be based on the social and economic sciences. The double nature of development pre-supposes a concern for the future of the earth's eco-system and for the survival of the human race. However, there is no rational argument (and least of all an economic one) that justifies a sacrifice of human consumption in the present as some form of guarantee towards this future. There is no scientific reasoning that demonstrates that unborn generations would be better off alive. Furthermore, science and technology, which feed our model of unsustainable growth, have lost their link with ethics and politics.

The analysis of wealth consumption highlights the existence of an economy of excess. The dynamic of a system depends on how this surplus is handled, which can be invested and consumed in very different ways, - on one hand investing the surplus in the industry of war and finishing by destroying this surplus or, on the other hand, developing leisure time whilst reducing consumption, reducing surplus production and the number of hours worked. These different possibilities are not determined by some automatic market mechanism, nor are they predetermined by some progressive historical development of the forces of production; they have to be submitted as political options for the whole community.

Obviously using the surplus through destruction, by whatever means, is neither desirable nor sustainable.

Sustainable development pre-supposes a worldwide peaceful harmony of the diversity of developments and therefore, diversity in life styles and levels of consumption. The modern view of a historically uniform and linear development must be abandoned, and turned instead towards a vision of diverse social organisations historically possible and ecologically desirable. There isn't only one style of "sustainable" life possible.

Thinking about sustainable development forces us not to deny the economical and technical constraints and to return to the supremacy of politics, from which stems the supremacy of the *polis*, by which we mean the community administered for the common good by the will of the people therein.

To attain sustainable development there must be, among other things, a moral and political objective, as it demands inter-generational justice. Protecting the rights of future generations forces us to recognise the absence of political institutions that incorporate a representation of the future. Only our morals, understood to be forms of social conduct inspired by a value system, enable us to defend the rights of un-born generations and the rights of other living species.

It is interesting to note that the ancient traditional archetype of human's "moral debt" is the ethical mirror of the physical and chemical limits of the Earth. In effect, the first empirical statement from humanity was the recognition that humans owe their life to another and that they are born with a moral debt. In the case of ecology, this means that at planetary level, human beings must firstly be concerned about the sustainability of their birthplace and only afterwards about the economic development necessary for their own comfort, with the exception, already mentioned, of unsatisfied fundamental basic needs, necessary for the survival of thousands of human beings and justice that compensates for the gulf that has built up between excessively rich and starving poor.

A world of responsibility and solidarity will only be possible when people analyse the effects of their actions on the environment and consider their role in the authorities of social and political production. The raising of consciousness must be made possible for everyone from childhood, thanks to free education that allows these situations to be analysed. This form of educational thinking, whilst respecting the individualism of each culture, must have a global content recognised by all educators.

The formation of a value system is based on a respect for solidarity and then learning to integrate at this level of community all humans who make up our environment, including non-organic nature. In return, this assumes the replacement of competition and individual rivalry, or even the egotistical desire of domination. Re-focussing personal thought on these values is the beginning of the journey, which leads to the discovery of the richness of being, over and above the richness of having.

An alternative model does not imply only one alternative form of thinking. There exist many different initiatives from the countries and regional/continental sub-systems within a single world economic system. This implies an absence of closed economies and the existence of an international division of labour; but it does not imply that there is only one form of socio-economic organisation within all the sub-systems. History has determined the differences (cultural, ethical and moral value systems, idiosyncrasies, "initial conditions"), which have made it possible to imagine the passage from the sovereignty of the Nation State to the People's Sovereignty in a globalised world, the reaffirmation and tolerant coexistence of cultural nationalisms. Authoritarian attempts to attain cultural uniformity as an instrument of power must be prevented. Cultural diversity is one of the sources of sustainable development at the global level. In the economic development of the countries of the South, environmental preservation is not separate from the preservation of social rights and the suppression of the foreign debt. Independence and politico-economic self-determination are necessary conditions (although not sufficient) for sustainable development; a counterexample to what we have just suggested is the non-sustainability inherent in the pillage of the colonial model.

### **3 – Initiatives and innovations**

*We do not believe it is possible to achieve a sustainable development which will be respectful of great ecological balances but at the price of exclusion for a large part of humanity*<sup>1</sup>.

The technological reality which underpins globalisation, the inevitable effects of cultural syncretism caused by the globalisation of multimedia communications and the inexorable worldwide ecological interdependency, constitute a number of factors common to all humanity that are indispensable in all models of economically, ecologically and politically sustainable social development.

To the best of our understanding, the following characteristics are particular to each specific model of economically, ecologically and politically sustainable social development.

A **socially sustainable** development implies that it is socially just and that it is lived in peace; furthermore, it implies that these two dimensions are inextricably linked. Social sustainability demands that economic development neither causes human catastrophes nor produces marginality and exclusion. We cannot describe a process that destroys part of humanity, because of the non-existence of mechanisms for the equitable sharing of revenues, as socially sustainable development. Environmental destruction and the increase in poverty must be treated in a comprehensive manner. It's important not to confuse the comprehensive concept of sustainability with that of justice; sustainable development can be defined as one of the characteristics of a socially just order.

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<sup>1</sup> Platform of the Alliance for a Responsible and United World

The management of the environment has always been limited by the state of social relations. This relationship is dialectic; in effect, if the environment leads to a specific social organisation, to continue this must, in itself, lead to a certain use of nature.

We can ask ourselves if sustainability is the art of positively combining the imbalances. And maybe we can reply that feeding, protecting and supporting the social tie is the cultural base necessary to successfully face up to the problem.

An **economically sustainable** development means making two clear distinctions. Principally, between the notions of “ development ” and “ growth ”. Whilst “ growth ” implies expansion through the accumulation of materials, with a predominantly quantitative change of order, “ development ” is synonymous with the expansion of potentialities, and is therefore predominantly qualitative. Furthermore, it is important to make a distinction between what Aristotle called *economy* and that which he called *chrematistic*, which is the art of obtaining and earning money through the intermediary of price manipulation. That which interests us is the *physical economy*, i.e. the production of goods and services in the physical sense and not term accountable, and its effect on the quality of life and not its effects on the quantity of available reserves. It is here that the concept of economic sustainability acquires all its meaning, because we have to consider not only what has been produced but also what has been destroyed during the production process and that which has been produced as waste during consumption. What's more, in the physical economy, problems linked to energy have to be taken into account, since its physical behaviour sends us back to *entropy*, which is the meeting place of economy and ecology.

Entropy is a rough calculation that indicates the share of disorder, degradation and non-recoverable energy loss as work, present in all physio-chemical systems. All forms of energy are gradually converted to heat and a share of heat dissipation is inevitable. The physical reality of entropy is present in the problem of environmental pollution and this irreversibility is a qualitative change that directly undermines the balance of the earth's eco-system, thus threatening human survival.

Given the possibility that questions of a qualitative order can modify those of a quantitative order, it is important to ask ourselves: What do we produce? Why and for whom do we produce? How do we produce?

An economic development *per capita* must be able to face up to very different situations and aspects. This implies the growth of the amount of goods and services available for those who need them, with a specific priority for the populations that are suffering from a lack of basic needs. For those who are not suffering from these deficiencies, it is necessary to look for improvements in terms of quality rather than quantity, above all where it concerns durable goods; a quantitative decline may even be necessary, as far as the consumption of energy and raw materials is concerned, in the countries that consume the most; this will be complimentary to the growth necessary to satisfy the un-satisfied fundamental needs of the most destitute societies. On the whole, worldwide growth must be subordinate to the restrictions of ecological sustainability. This implies a redistribution of the earth's riches, in such a way that the rich that pollute are both less rich and pollute less. In any case, sustainable economic development does not demand the sacrifice of the quality of life of present generations nor does it mortgage the ability of future generations to satisfy their quality of life.

An ecologically sustainable development means that the direction of the development must not undermine the dynamic balance of the earth's eco-system necessary for the survival of the human race (the eco-systems pick up the leftovers of economic activity and carry out other essential functions for the economy, including the areas of health and biological diversity). From the physical standpoint and recognising the fact that humanity has already exceeded "the limits of growth", this implies that the elements necessary for

production must satisfy three conditions in relation to the rates of sustainable exploitation and emission per time unit.

- The rate of use of renewable resources – earth, air, forest, and fish – must be inferior to their rate of regeneration.
- The rate of use of non-renewable resources - fossil fuels, mineral deposits with a high level of purity, fossilised groundwater – must not exceed the rate at which substitutes can be renewed. Given that the creation of renewable substitutes necessitates harnessing more energy, thus increasing entropy pollution, this condition goes hand in hand with the next.
- The rate of polluting emissions must be inferior to the rates of environmental recycling, including the reversal of the process of global warming.

The accomplishment of these essential conditions for ecological sustainability invites a recognition of the existence of physical restrictions to world economic growth, independently of chrematistic arguments; the capacity of environmental preservation and the rates of sustainable exploitation must be defined, approximately, in physical terms; the eco-system does not know processes of growth and economy, whilst the sub-system of the former, it occupies a more important place each day within its heart. Therefore, we have to think in terms of two optimums: an optimum allowance and an optimum scale, whilst all the time remembering that the very notion of a social option pre-supposes a value judgement and not a technical conclusion. Self-functioning of the market can neither lead to optimum allowance nor an optimum scale. The price mechanism, institutionally regulated through revenue sharing, may be useful when it is a matter of optimum allowance, but in no case will it lead to an optimum scale. This is linked to systemic efficiency, where political and economic aspects are interlocked in an inseparable way, subject to ecological restrictions.

A **political sustainable** development implies that the economic and ecological dynamic of the social system, neither raises tensions nor builds up discontentment, which would make the political system inoperable for society or lead to political instability, with its eventual destructive consequences, provoked by the violent explosion of these tensions and conflicts. If a system respects the notion of justice, culturally accepted in its context, the tensions that lead to conflict can be avoided in a satisfactory manner on condition that there is a social dialogue; the evolution of political processes develop through the fact of knowing the eventual “discords”, which are the expression of diversity and constitute motors of the dynamic for the change of social conduct. Furthermore, the basis of effective political participation is economic independence, i.e. the liberation from the state of need, that those, who only possess their working strength to assure their physical survival, find themselves in. This freedom includes the event of assuring – through the intermediary of revenues not linked to work, obtained by virtue of citizen’s rights, unconditionally and for all – the ability to consume in order to satisfy fundamental needs, independently of work, which, moreover, must also be shared.

When all is said and done, the notion of sustainable development returns us to a debate about the society in which we live and the exercise of democracy, which rests on political participation in the decision making process at all levels, particularly the grass roots. This said, it often happens that the grass roots represented by the whole of the poor and illiterate population is not ready for this participation. We are convinced that development will not be sustainable unless there is a profound change in people, as well as in the institutions to which they belong and the society around them. It is therefore necessary to imagine actions that target these objectives in the three dimensions already mentioned.

The change of the non-sustainable trend of the current model of globalisation implies a change in the dominant technologies as much as the culturally authoritarian values, and social/national relationships of the world system.

In the capitalist system nature, as a means of production, is only a simple resource for obtaining economic benefits. The unbridled version of capitalism, which has been predominant in the process of globalisation, has pushed the destruction of nature over and above the limits of sustainability for the earth’s eco-system.

But the axis of this perverse globalisation is found in the loss of monetary sovereignty to the hands of speculative financial globalisation; this is why a *globalisation of solidarity* compatible with completely sustainable development demands a new International Monetary System, based on a shared monetary sovereignty, in such a way as to subordinate financial globalisation to a globalisation that is productive, fair and sustainable. This way will also allow the *deterioration of exchange terms*, from which the countries of the South suffer, and which tends to be compensated by social, economic and fiscal *dumping*, to be controlled.

If a multilateral supranational authority, without financial imperialism, administered the International Monetary and Credit System exchange terms would be free of manipulations subjected to financial interests. And further, if there were politicians who opposed fiscal, social and ecological dumping (through national measures of self-defence or international measures of retaliation), the consequence would be that the only restriction to freely choosing any specialisation for economic development would truly be efficiency, i.e. the ability to produce at the lowest cost thanks to better technology, better administration, better training of the work-force or because of better salaries or better standard of living for workers.

Foreign Debt is rarely mentioned in debates about sustainability. The reimbursement of “interest on interest” of the Foreign Debt has provoked a veritable social genocide in the poorest nations.

The simple lifting of the debt will not open on its own the way for sustainability since the concept of development imposed by the countries of the North on the countries of the South will remain unchanged. The hostility of the North begins when the South sees itself forced to join the rationality of the North. If a global sustainable development is possible, it will depend on a reduction in the flow of cheap energy and raw materials, which has continued moving from the South towards the North as in colonial times, in order to change the materialist basis of excessive consumption in the richest and most polluting nations. Thus, a new global scenario requires that the re-formulation of the International Monetary System is done without the threat of the South's financially accountable debt (and not real) and that it begins the repayment of the ecological debt (real but unaccounted) incurred by the North over several centuries.

From a technical point of view it is possible to respect the physical limits of the ecosystem, by reducing the flow of resources consumed and the polluting elements emitted, simultaneously improving the quality of life for the whole of humanity. The technical condition necessary to make this happen is a rapid and dramatic rise in efficiency from the ecological viewpoint. Technically speaking, development is sustainable, globally, when the percentage rise in technological efficiency, in sociological terms, is greater than economic growth. It is important to stress that there is efficiency in respect of the system as a whole and another from the point of view of microeconomics. Growth limits impose the need for efficiency in both senses.

Systemic efficiency brings us back to a model of sustainable development, which demands a new international economic order based on diversity, accompanied by a sense of justice and is constructed in terms of solidarity and cooperation.

From the microeconomic viewpoint, it is possible to promote a *revolution of efficiency* based on ecological demands, technological advances and changes in the styles of consumption by:

- a) Changing the direction of technological progress. There are definite studies that demonstrate the viability of a revolution in energy productivity, a revolution in the productivity of raw materials and a revolution in transport productivity.
- b) Assuring that the efficiency revolution is lucrative. Economic incitements are a reality that can be administered in function of the efficiency revolution. If an enterprise must place itself in commercial relationships, whilst at the same time being “socially responsible”, there has to be a logic that can be translated into future benefits and assure the enterprise's survival. The fact that an activity is lucrative or not, depends on the relative prices and these are the result of revenue politics administered by the political powers. The efficiency revolution can be lucrative, if it combines measures such as the elimination of subsidies for the use of

certain resources, education about consumption, the control of demand, planning for minimal costing, the collection of tax levied on waste production, environmental auditing and ecological fiscal reform.

It is the capitalist economies of the richest countries that have the most polluting lifestyles and, consequently, it is these countries that must give the greatest priority to the improvement of technological efficiency in ecological terms, in such a way that their economic growth slows down whilst they increase the services and well-being offered; by changing their way of consumption, sometimes confined to waste, and at the same time improving the quality of life. In contrast, to improve the quality of life for the part of humanity that lives in misery, the poorest economies could have an economic growth that is faster than the environmental efficiency of the technology they use, in such a way that they can address the unsatisfied basic needs. Globally, the whole will be ecologically sustainable, but also equitable and accompanied by a better quality of life for the whole of humanity.

A completely sustainable model of development as a proposition for alternative globalisation brings us back to the question of productive specialisation and international trade, in which concepts such as fair trade and ethical consumption have to be confirmed. The present-day dynamic of world trade not only results in an unequal exchange between producers of raw materials and the industrial nations, but also provokes further destruction of the regions and the degradation of the environment. The hackneyed concept of “comparative advantages”, based on natural conditions linked to geography, has always been a trap for the nations of the South, condemning them to “the comparative advantages of raw materials”, whilst the states of the North have the right to “the comparative advantages of industrial development”. This is even less acceptable when the assumed comparative advantage is linked to the extraction of non-renewable raw materials, which implies that once the source of raw materials has run out, the “optimum” decision of the world market would be the simple disappearance of the society in question, which will sink into famine and misery. Furthermore, the fact that a country possesses certain natural resources should neither imply any obligation (nor any right) to have to exploit them without any anxiety and humanity cannot commit this ecological error of forcing certain countries to fall into excessive practices of exploitation, because of their extreme state of un-satisfied need. Democratic sovereignty, which characterises people in the context of fair and just globalisation, rests in their self-determination to choose an efficient specialisation with which to integrate themselves into the system of globalised productivity. Thus, the productive efficiency of each country will depend on the fact that the socio-economic-productive system is the one best adapted to the maximum output of their potentialities; this is where real competitive advantages spring from, ones which are born from the training and specialisation of workers, fruits of the politics of education and public health, of politics, research and development, of industrial politics, etc. It is very important to point out that the cooperative participation of the labour force is one of the sources of competitive advantages.

In the same way that microeconomic efficiency is based on cooperative participation, it is possible to build up a macroeconomic system, which benefits from cooperative participation. But this, naturally, means leaving the realm of pure economics; the organisation of a macroeconomic cooperative participation must be compatible with (and opposite to) the structuring of social participation in the political power of institutions.



We do not think that there will be sustainable solutions to international environmental problems unless the positions of all the weak elements of the global system are strengthened.

#### **4 - Proposals**

- 1) To move towards a new system of procedures and institutions for world government.
- 2) To reform the system of international institutions in such a way as to favour a certain democratic balance between political, economic, judicial, etc world powers. Propose the reform of the International finance system, by starting with the transformation of the General Assembly of the United Nations into a world parliament, with elected members and a weighted system of proportional representation. All international organisations must inform and submit accounts to the Assembly General. The latter must convene: a) an international conference to reform international finance institutions, so that they can stabilise economies and facilitate a fairer globalisation b) an international conference to reform the WTO in order to facilitate fair trade.
- 3) Thus, political institutions of a new world order will generate a permanent wide public sector, defined by natural resources (the atmosphere, space, the oceans and the biodiversity) which are subjected to negative externalities and by public goods (international peace, including cultures)
- 4) A global regulation of Principles of Protection for the eco-system, humanity, the moderation of consumption, precaution, protection of diversity, citizenship, minimising pollution emissions, cooperation, “polluter-payer”, not only at the microeconomic level but also at the level of States and continental organisations, making sure that the latter do not benefit from a licence to pollute and denaturalise. The image of “global citizenship” can help to contribute to correcting the imbalance between capital and labour at the global level; that which must anchor populations to their region of origin must not be the legal impossibility to emigrate, but the completely sustainable development of their place of origin.
- 5) To promote the setting up of an International Tribunal on the Legitimacy of the Foreign Debt of the South. A moratorium until the moment when the distinction is made between legitimate and illegitimate debt allowing the financing of sustainable development processes in the South. In the case of reorganisation, social expenditure must be protected in respect of financial expenditure. In the same way that perpetrators of crimes against humanity merit to be subjected to the decisions of an International Penal Tribunal –in the process of being formed—, financial delinquents must submit accounts to an International Tribunal of Foreign Debt.
- 6) Establish indicators of social and ecological debt that measure the ecological and social debt and include them in international conferences about debt. Redefine the concept of humane development and develop new indicators that take into account the conservation of the environment, social durability, and non-discrimination of people and the effects of negative externalities.
- 7) Find a solution to the debt crisis in the South, using the precedent set in Germany in 1953, including the limitation of repayments to 3.5% of public budgets. Countries in debt would only be able to pay back their debts if they attain a surplus of foreign trade and a balanced balance of payments.

- 8) Create openness in national financial systems and abolish tax havens. Private institutions must adhere to an international charter that defines the responsibilities of international loan organisations.
- 9) Actions must be defined to oppose the monopolistic offensive, supported by the major nations through patents, which at the same time appropriate popular knowledge in function of economic interests and attempt to impose their rights to patent knowledge and goods which constitute the social heritage.
- 10) At the same time as setting up systems of sustainable production and more rational processes of change in land use, it is necessary to optimise the mechanisms of alert, prevention, resolution and mitigation of natural disasters and those caused by human factors.
- 11) Establish a tax on international financial transactions in order to stabilise monetary transactions, to contribute to the financing of sustainable development and in order to eliminate poverty. Create importation taxes targeted against social and ecological dumping.
- 12) A possible reform (albeit insufficient) to mitigate the materialist culture and the production of symbolic value for merchandise would be the Introduction of a tax on advertising revenues for the media and a progressive tax on income from activities associated with advertising (up to 80% or 90% of revenues). Furthermore, this would encourage the independence of means of communication with respect to their advertising revenue, and to have a press that has fewer links to the interests of corporations and other controlling interests. The creation of alternative channels of interactive social communication must play an important role in the promotion of sustainable development.
- 13) A solid base for political sustainability requires a re-definition of the role of municipalities; in effect it is in the local domain that community life is most directly expressed. To do this, it is necessary to promote participation at neighbourhood level for all issues linked to the improvement of the family, social and institutional quality of life, and also to favour the setting up of participatory budgeting.
- 14) Education for sustainable development must be set in its context, by putting the emphasis on new forms of needs perception and resource use. This should be concerned with: a) training in terms of values that strengthen the understanding of the responsibility necessary for a sustainable development that is all-embracing and b) training in the knowledge necessary for solving the problems associated with sustainability. The formation of useful knowledge pre-supposes sustainable forms of behaviour, such as watching over the conservation of drinking water and fertile soil, slowing down the advance of desertification or preserving public health, not only known epidemics but also new illnesses springing from technological manipulation of food production or brought about by the poor quality of life associated with the urban industrial civilisation. Traditional knowledge accumulated by humanity over the millenniums has to be re-valued. It is necessary to globalise the issue of sustainable development as soon as the student enters the school; the content should be given in an interdisciplinary way, putting together the concepts of Sustainable Development/ Non Sustainable Growth, Social inclusion/ Social Exclusion, Responsible Consumption/Irresponsible Consumption, Globalisation of Solidarity /Foreign Debt of the South, Respect for the Environment/Flow of Raw Materials and Energy towards the North, etc.

## **5 – Strategies and agents**

Global change is possible if the social forces, and the projects capable of carrying out the necessary reforms, come together in the nation states. However widespread corruption has undermined the ability

of political forces to bring about change in respect of the administration of the state. This suggests a continuing decline in the political will to improve the living conditions of the poorest, tackle the problems of the environment or to take steps to ensure the rights of future generations. The corruption of political and union leaders and of independent journalism has made it easier for existing institutions to hide or cover up information critical of the dominant system or to marginalize individual promoters of radical thought or political force. Therefore it seems necessary to create an alternative to political society and in fact, civil society has started to generate new modes of expression and action.

The agents of change are no longer exclusively either the traditional political parties, or the unions and the labour movement in its role of "historical subject necessary for the appearance of inexorable and pre-determined change". Other agents have assumed a new protagonism, which has tended to challenge the authoritarian order of the "single thought". NGOs, social movements and civil organisations have assumed an increasing importance; at the same time we are witness to the self-transformation of political and social agents that were agents of planned confrontation previously.

But intermediary institutions, NGOs and other examples of what we call the "third sector" will clearly attain their objectives when they come together in a political project that contains them as well as represents them, which does not necessarily mean a new political party in the traditional style. Politics will continue to be synonymous with struggle for power and it is only with popular power that it will be possible to conquer the powers that have a vested interest in maintaining the dynamic of un-sustainable globalisation.

In this logic, the setting up of judicial constraints and especially civil mechanisms of dialogue and action, which would consider rights and specific remits, in such a way as to exercise an influence on public political decisions and forms of participation at the local level, constitutes a new way, which could reformulate democratic participation. From there, it will be again possible to rebuild the basis of government, considered as an ensemble of processes set in motion and controlled by all social agents.

There have recently appeared global reactions against the world capital model of dialogue. There were demonstrations against events at the World Bank, the International Monetary fund, the WTO, the Multilateral Investment Accords, which were expressed in Seattle, Davos, Prague, etc. Now, in a more institutionalised way and based on proposals that envisage an alternative globalisation, the World Social Forum at Porto Alegre has come together, and which constitutes a contribution to the building of a world founded on rights not financial aspects; one of the remarkable aspects, as an alternative strategy to the current model, has been the salvaging of democracy by populist organisations from civil society. We consider it important to support the efforts of the World Social Forum and we offer ourselves as bearers of the alternative proposal for a completely sustainable development.

The Alliance for a Responsible and United World must support the creation of a network of groups monitoring foreign debt and sustainable finance, as well as a resource centre dedicated to the same issues. A team must be set up to carry out research on the question of social and ecological debt. These teams must be of the highest academic level, with university support so that their reports have the necessary authority to be heard.