

## **FPH Position on the Second Stage of the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World**

*The Foundation, in elaborating its project for 2003-2010, redefined its relations with the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World. After examining a number of possible options, it chose to provide selective support to the Alliance—which should remain a non-institutional entity—provided it is redefined by a Constituent Charter.*

Foundation Board

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### **Abstract:**

The FPH played a crucial role in the birth of the Alliance in 1994, then by financing its development until 2001. After this first stage, taking into account the evolution of the international context since 1994 and the lessons of the history of relations between the Alliance and the FPH, it is indispensable to specify the nature and governance of the Alliance, to analyze its contradictions, and to redefine the importance of FPH backing of the Alliance in the 2004-2010 period.

This is the object of the present memo, which serves as an introduction to the memo “Constituent Charter, Working Procedures, and a Calendar for the Alliance 2004-2010.”

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## **1. The Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World is the fruit of a history that is intimately connected to that of the FPH**

Ten years ago, the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH) launched the Alliance for a Responsible and United World. The Alliance benefited at the start from the thinking of the Vézelay group: a common platform, the perspective of an Earth Citizens' Assembly, some working principles. By taking this initiative, the FPH was aware that it was proposing a collective adventure of a new kind, the contours of which could not be specified beforehand as they would depend above all on the reception it would get.

As for any collective adventure, its nature became clearer as it progressed: methods were developed, tools were broken in, contradictions appeared.

From 1996 to 1999, a number of different efforts were made to define the Alliance and to give it a collective system of governance that was in compliance with its nature and at the same time efficient and realistic. Such efforts were not fully successful. Nonetheless, they provided a better understanding of the difficulties that needed to be overcome. They showed, in particular, that the Alliance had nothing to gain by turning into a formal institution such as an organization, a political party, or a union.

## **2. The world has changed since the establishment in 1994 of the Alliance, which must therefore redefine its position in the new context**

Over the years, new movements or collective processes have sprung to promote the idea of another globalization. Best known among these are ATTAC and the World Social Forums. The Alliance had no reason to duplicate them. Their development both reinforced the early insights of the Alliance and highlighted its own added value: a working forum open to a plurality of opinions, the will to associate persons and institutions from all over the world and from all walks of life, concern for moving toward proposals, favoring long-term initiatives, with insistence on cross-cutting connections among the different initiatives and on the methods: in a word, everything that distinguishes an alliance for another globalization from an anti-globalization coalition.

## **3. In the course of defining its guidelines for the 2003-2010 period, the FPH had to specify its own position with regard to the Alliance**

Thanks to the FPH's massive investment, the Alliance was particularly and intensely active in 2000-2001: production of nearly sixty Proposal Papers, organization and achievement of five Continental Assemblies, constitution of many socioprofessional networks, and finally, organization of the World Citizens Assembly, which produced the Charter of Human Responsibilities and the Agenda for the Twenty-first Century.

The World Citizens Assembly marked the end of the moral commitment that the FPH had made in 1994 to the Alliance. And yet, in many respects, the adventure was just beginning. A second stage of the Alliance was opening. The FPH could not get involved without redefining the nature of the Alliance and its governance. Considering the historic and financial weight of the FPH, this

redefinition called for the latter to state its own guidelines and the potential importance of its commitment to a redefined Alliance.

The FPH's 2003-2010 guidelines were drawn up, discussed, and adopted by the Foundation Board during its sabbatical period of February 2002 to June 2003. During this period of uncertainty and thinking, the FPH encouraged a collective discussion among the Allies, which took place in an e-forum for a period of one year (March 2002 - March 2003). It also financed various Allies' initiatives in the framework of a "call for initiatives" launched in May 2002 and renewed in January 2003.

The importance of the backing for the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World in the FPH guidelines for 2003-2010, the relations between the FPH and the Alliance, and the nature and governance of the Alliance were subjects that were all amply discussed during the sabbatical period.

In June 2003, the Foundation Board had to decide among three hypotheses:

- stop all backing to the Alliance, considering that it was up to others to take up its financing and that this would be the only way to cut the umbilical cord between the FPH and the Alliance;
- changing the Alliance into a formal institution, a legal body with organs set up under its by-laws, making it then possible to establish classic partnership connections between the FPH and the Alliance;
- seek the redefinition of the nature of the Alliance, the establishment of a Constituent Charter and provide continuing, more selective FPH support to the Alliance as redefined through this process but maintaining its non-institutional character.

The Foundation Board opted for the third hypothesis. Indeed it believed that the first two would actually mean the death of the Alliance in its most innovative aspects. The first hypothesis hardly seemed realistic, no other source of funding seeming to be available in the short term for an informal international dynamics, a project that is very distant from the classic funding criteria of public and private donors. The second hypothesis amounted to transforming Allies and persons who have taken part in the work of the Alliance (a great many of which were not even formally "Allies") into members of a new international organization. However, it is the open and pluralistic character of the Alliance process that seduced most those who have participated in it. In these conditions, we considered it would be a mistake to sacrifice what was essential by giving up the very spirit of the Alliance in the name of the Alliance's autonomy vis-à-vis the FPH, an autonomy which moreover would be illusory as long as the funding did not come from a number of different sources.

For the third hypothesis to be viable, it is nevertheless necessary to establish a broad consensus on a redefined Alliance and on clearly stated rules of the game. We even spoke of a "re-establishment of the Alliance," in the sense of setting its second stage on strong foundations. The expression was abandoned, as it could be interpreted as criticism or even a repudiation of the accomplishments of the first stage. Although the expression was not adopted, the idea of redefining the foundations of the Alliance has remained.

To allow everyone to state their position on these proposals, we must first recall the specific contradictions that need to be overcome by the Alliance as it moves out of its first stage.

#### **4. The future development of the Alliance supposes that a number of objective contradictions be overcome**

Starting from what we have experienced together in the last ten years, we can identify the following contradictions:

- The Alliance gathers persons and institutions that have become involved in it with different, sometimes conflicting motivations: some found in it a forum of thorough, interprofessional, cross-cultural, cross-thematic, proposal-oriented collective thinking, which they did not find in classic movements; others were rather seeking an international movement that would be capable of speaking out and acting as a more classic social or political movement might do. Thus the nature and governance of the Alliance are very different, depending on whether the first or the second expectations are held.
- The Alliance claims to be an open process but in the eyes of others, it does have an identity.
- If the entirety of the ambition of the Alliance, the need to compare views, approaches, and proposals, constitutes for some Allies the main originality and added value of the Alliance, for many others who are potentially interested in the Alliance objectives, these elements constitute a major obstacle to their involvement in it.
- The existence of a calendar and a multiannual strategy and the focus on the working tools and methods are in the eyes of many Allies the main guarantors of collective effectiveness; others, on the contrary, have the feeling that these are limiting factors.
- The pluralism of points of view and the capacity to determine common perspectives from them are unquestionable historic achievements of the Alliance; but its informal character deprives it of the classic means to take full advantage of them: Who can speak in the name of the Alliance? In what conditions and according to what procedures can an initiative use the Alliance “label”? These questions have not been given clear answers.
- The Alliance, because of the very procedures of its birth and its development, is intrinsic to the FPH, the financial involvement of which was both substantial and lasting; but what constitutes the very condition for its existence is also its main weakness; many within the Alliance and even more outside of it have not succeeded in making a clear distinction between the two. Hence the many tensions that have punctuated the life of the Alliance, to the point that as it came out of the first stage, the FPH had the feeling that it was losing its own identity to the benefit of the Alliance while on the other side, some Allies, in particular the early Allies, suspected the FPH of instrumentalizing the Alliance for its benefit, which led them to moving away from it.
- Alliance thinking resulted, on the ethical level, in the Charter of Human Responsibilities. In practice, however, many Allies behaved as “consumers” of the work of the Alliance, which was among their rights as Allies, in particular the right to information, rather than as actors in the development of the Alliance in compliance with their responsibilities to other Allies, beginning with the responsibility to inform, to react, and to respond to requests.

As we can see, these six contradictions are rooted in deep, objective foundations. It will take more than a simple clarification to solve them; every case requires arbitration or innovation.

Here are the solutions we have favored and propose:

a) The Alliance is a pluralistic working forum, a forum for the development of proposals taking the complexity of the issues into account; it is a forum where Allies involved in action can refresh their sources; it hopes to constitute a source of inspiration, thinking, methods, and proposals for a variety of social movements, organizations, political parties, public authorities, etc., without claiming to take their place.

b) The Alliance has been the prototype of a new form of organization, “citizens alliances”; we believe that this form of organization has a great future ahead of it because it meets the needs of a global society in the making, at a time when centralized, top-down, dogmatic social and political organizations have lost their credit and when the development of the Internet enables more open and more fluid forms of organization. Basing itself on the experience acquired with the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World, the FPH decided, for the 2003-2010 period, to back a variety of citizens alliances within a given social and professional environment, around a given theme, or in a given region. It wagers that most of these citizens alliances will eventually be interested in getting involved in the Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World, when they themselves feel the need to be linked up with other dynamics.

c) The 2004-2010 calendar for the Alliance and the working methods provide a framework of overall consistency and the FPH will make compliance with them a condition for its own financial support. But the Alliance is vast and every Ally is free to take initiatives in it and to invite other Allies to associate themselves with it.

d) The Constituent Charter of the Alliance must specify the procedures according to which a person, an initiative, an institution can use the Alliance reference; it specifies the procedures for consulting the Allies and for using the Alliance “label” for initiatives and documents.

e) The FPH, in compliance with its by-laws and in the framework of the biennial budgets voted by the Board, defines its financial and methodological support to the Alliance freely and sovereignly. It plans to back as a priority:

- the maintenance of the working procedures and the information system;
- the establishment of the governance of the Alliance;
- the circulation, the enhancement, and the expression, in terms of different socioprofessional spheres and of different regions, of the Charter of Human Responsibilities;
- decompartmentalization and collective summary work, among others in continuation to the Proposal Papers and the Agenda;
- support for initiatives that reflect the priorities expressed in the Agenda for the Twenty-first Century resulting from the World Citizens Assembly;
- support for a new generation of Geocultural Groups.

The FPH will be very sensitive to collective proposals by Allies for initiatives to be backed in the framework of the above-mentioned priorities.

f) Allies (i.e., the persons and institutions that endorse the Constituent Charter of the Alliance) are defined by their responsibilities to each other before they are defined by any rights.

## **5. The governance of the Alliance is inspired from the general principles of governance**

As early as its in first stage, the Alliance focused on governance issues, which are present in most Proposal Papers. Convergence of thinking has led to the statement of general principles of governance, which together constitute a true revolution in the conception of governance. Requirement for coherence therefore leads to applying these principles to the governance of the Alliance itself.

One of the main ideas is that traditional governance places the accent on objects, on institutional forms, while governance of the future must place the accent on relations. Where traditional governance privileges institutions, the distribution of competence among these institutions, and the statement of rules having a legal nature, governance of the future privileges the objectives sought, the ethical criteria of the action, and the ways of doing things, the actual practices, the working procedures, the cooperation procedures among the actors. Where traditional governance is principally interested in the legality of the exercise of power—i.e., precisely in its compliance with rules—governance of the future is principally interested in the legitimacy of the exercise of power, which ensues in its exercise from compliance with an ethics, with common objectives, and with requirements for effectiveness. Where traditional governance considers power as a sort of pie to be shared out, governance of the future considers power as a capacity for initiative, of undefined quality by nature, a capacity to overcome helplessness.

In fact, all these features of governance of the future apply perfectly to the Alliance, an informal dynamics born precisely from the determination to overcome helplessness, to take destiny into our own hands, and to generate new forms of cooperation and joint work.

Hence the three principles that are the basis for the redefinition of the Alliance:

- a Constituent Charter set in marble, foundation of the moral contract among the Allies; it comprises three parts— the nature of the Alliance, its objectives, and its ethical charter;
- working procedures that can be continuously improved and reviewed, which are adapted to the nature of the Alliance and the objectives sought, and which define, among others, the conditions in which an Ally can refer to the Alliance;
- a group of “guarantors,” which draws its legitimacy from the rigor of its attitude, in charge of overseeing compliance with the Constituent Charter.