

Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation

World Citizens Assembly
(December 2-10, 2001 - Lille)
Closing Speech - December 10, 2001

by Pierre Calame

Dear Participants, Dear Guests, Dear Friends,

We are all reassembled for the first time after eight days, somewhat like navigators relieved to have finally reached their port, yet rich with memories and sharing.

More than once, I was angry at myself for having led you into this all too ambitious adventure, during which the flaws in its preparation sprung up like leaks in the ship. The crew's generosity and courage, the kindness of the passengers, and Paulette's unfailing support when all at once everything seemed too difficult, allowed me, I believe, to maintain the ship on its course.

I) Progress of the Assembly

We had promised not to submit a document to the Assembly for approval, and of course, we will keep our word.

From the very start, two objectives were assigned to the Assembly. First, to verify that we were capable of **identifying jointly the major challenges of the world of tomorrow**, around which partnerships and alliances could be fashioned. Then, to compare our points of view on the need, the nature, and the structure **of a Charter of Human Responsibilities** that could act as a common

ethical platform for the international community, alongside the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration for Human Rights.

Today, we shall be able to draw up a first assessment: we shall devote this morning to the common challenges and this afternoon to the Charter. Before the rapporteurs expose the results of the socioprofessional, thematic, and regional workshops, I would like to provide a picture of *the overall consistency of our work*, for in a collective adventure, we need to stop, look back, and understand the path that we have traveled before moving on to the next stage.

To start with, from the Platform for a Responsible and United World, which gave birth to the Alliance in 1994, I would like to underscore four ideas that have guided us throughout the years and now again this week:

- If we maintain our present ways of life and forms of development much longer, we are bound for self-destruction. To avoid this, we must **undertake major changes**; we therefore need to identify them.
- We are united by a **community of destinies** and at the same time we are **rich with our diversity; we therefore need to associate unity and diversity**.
- The crisis of today's world is a **crisis in the relationship** among human beings, among societies, and with our environment; **we therefore need to take on the challenges**.

- There is no miracle solution; we therefore need, patiently, to join **beings** and **things and to re-establish broken links**, so we are able to determine new perspectives.

Just as we imagined it, the Alliance is a **place of freedom** and **set of working methods** to establish lasting links among people, movements, socioprofessional circles, and the regions of the world to take up these challenges.

In his opening speech, Michel Rocard delivered **three messages**: "War is always easier than peace; mutual knowledge is the basis of peace; when trust has been established, many things become possible."

By placing this Assembly under the sign of dialogue and mutual attention, of the search for convergence among those **seeking sense**, wherever they are from, which is what the Alliance wished to be, I believe that we have made, in a world rustling with violence, a modest but genuine effort in the direction of sustainable peace. **We have attempted to weave today's society so we may weave tomorrow's world.**

We have established that it is possible to gather in every socioprofessional circle and in every region of the world, women and men who are prepared overcome obstacles to engage in a dialog with their counterparts.

In the course of this one week, we have tried to assemble **the puzzle of the different regions of the world**, not to melt them into a uniform sameness but to form a **mosaic**. To do this, we needed to overcome prejudices and barriers so we could lay down an outline, not of new proposals but, more simply and more deeply, of **global society's common sense**.

Sixty Proposal Papers were drafted in the framework of the Alliance. It would have been impossible to take full advantage of so many contributions in just one week. This Assembly had a completely different role: its aim was to **establish links among the people, the experiences, the questions, and the concerns**.

To do so, we had to **go back and forth from diversity to unity and back to diversity**.

Indeed, if the Assembly was to prefigure a future World Parliament, we needed to answer a preliminary question: **How will such a Parliament fix its own agenda?**

This is why we, the organizers, had not fixed the work themes in advance. **The themes were to be generated by the work of the Assembly itself**.

For this to happen, we needed participants to **express** freely, throughout the week, their ideas, concerns, and proposals, then to **group them together** and **prioritize** them so we could determine a strategy without losing the wealth of abundance and diversity. We needed to be able to **organize the information**

without impoverishing it, to establish links without losing intelligibility, and to make it possible for everyone, once back home, to browse easily within the mass of various contributions. To achieve this, we went through three successive stages corresponding to the three dimensions of diversity: the "socioprofessional" stage, the "thematic" stage, and the "regional" stage.

1. The socioprofessional stage: identifying the questions, understanding the different points of view, and comparing diagnoses

On Monday, December 3, twenty different socioprofessional groups (farmers and fishermen, community inhabitants, company leaders, scientists, unionists, young persons, women, religious leaders, military persons, international civil servants, local elected officials, artists, researchers, academics, political leaders, publishers, health workers, journalists, jurists, and shareholders) were asked to state separately what changes they felt were necessary and **where they felt we have to take action**. In each socioprofessional group, the various proposals for change were grouped together in large families in order to draw **a map of concerns for every group**. Here is, for instance, the result of the work of the "Health workers" group. (Inclure carte "Travailleurs de la santé").

This was a stage both of diagnosis — what's wrong — and of projection into the future — what ought to be done. It allowed us to UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW AND FIND WHERE THEY CONVERGE.

To do so, we **grouped together** the perspectives of change provided by the different socioprofessional groups by themes, and that, in turn, revealed two surprises:

- the likeness of the concerns, from one group to the next,
- and a shared prioritization of problems: the most abundant maps, those for which most socioprofessional groups expressed themselves, are the map for values and education, the map for citizenship and global governance, and finally the one for management of the ecosystems.

Following, for instance, are the proposals for change by the different socioprofessional groups in the area of citizenship and politics.

Projection Map for Citizenship/Socioprofessional Group

This means there are unsuspected possibilities for various socioprofessional groups to work in closer connection and form partnerships around the issues for which every group, or nearly, without consulting one another, stated the need for change. Take, for instance, the idea of a School for Peace presented by the military group!

How can we explain these convergences and common priorities? It seems to me that we are in the presence of an awareness that humankind is rich in knowledge and in material resources but no longer knows how to have them make sense, nor how to share them fairly, and that it no longer knows how to manage itself,

nor how to manage its environment. For science and technology, for instance, no socioprofessional group said that it was necessary to develop science and technology; all of them said, instead, "we need to share knowledge, we need to make it take roots, we need to put it at the service of all societies."

These astonishing convergences reflected one of the strongest ideas of the Platform for a Responsible and United World: our societies have changed so quickly, pulled by economic, scientific, and technological developments, that we are thinking tomorrow's realities with yesterday's ideas and wanting to manage tomorrow's society with day-before-yesterday's institutions.

2. The thematic stage: drawing up elements of strategy on the important issues through a cross-socioprofessional approach

As early as Monday evening, an urgent task awaited us: to define **a common agenda** from all the ideas and proposals made by the different socioprofessional groups.

The young team of "mappers" had the ponderous mission to group the proposals from the twenty socioprofessional groups into large themes. The groups were assembled through a transparent process, which is an essential condition of democracy. Anyone can thus build their own agenda using the same process.

Seventeen priority themes were selected. Here is the corresponding map.

(Inclure la carte des 17 thèmes)

For each of them, we not only know its title, which is necessarily vague, but most importantly, **the way in which it was manufactured**, what it refers to, the proposals out of which it was built. Here is an example:

(inclure quelque chose ?)

Each of these seventeen **themes covers a different area of human activity**, combining ethical, cultural, economic, technical and political proposals.

Once these themes were identified, we needed, for each of them, to draw up elements of strategy through workshops including representatives of the different socioprofessional groups and the different regions of the world. The most we could do during this first World Assembly was to establish a **table of contents** of strategies, that is to say, an organized list of common working themes. Participants all showed a lot of good will in this difficult exercise. The method being new and the themes not having been fixed in advance, it had not been possible to prepare and to train the facilitators. You found the way to offset these weaknesses in the organization and facilitation by finding your own way to organize things. You did so with simplicity and efficiency. I believe that you accepted **that this was the price to pay for meeting the requirements of this**

form of democracy. Your understanding of this was repeatedly crucial for the good progress of the Assembly.

As for the resource persons, those who had worked under pressure to complete their Proposal Papers in time for the Assembly, they had to accept that their work was not fully taken advantage of at this moment, that their choice themes were not at the center of the discussions. We would also like to thank them for their understanding.

The seventeen themes are the reflection of the convergent concerns of the different socioprofessional groups: six are related to values, to the culture of tolerance, to the use of science, to education, and to the media. Eight others pertain to different aspects of governance and reveal a few main directions: efficient, equitable, and legitimate world regulations that can deal with our common challenges; another way of conceiving relations between the local and the global; building a world citizenship and the means of information and education necessary to achieve it; tolerance, dialogue, and respect for differences; and partnerships in order to combine the unity and diversity of the world.

For every theme, we proceeded in the same way: we collected all the participants' proposals then grouped them around a few main strategy lines. Here

is the result of this work for the "Education" theme, for which we previously saw how it had been built.

(Inclure carte de l'axe stratégique "Education").-

The maps show clearly how **each strategy, whatever the subject matter, overlaps with others**: ethics is related to governance, governance to citizenship, citizenship to education, etc. This is the very reason why our ways of thinking and our forms of management, which are based on a rigid partitioning of roles between women and men, between the public and the private sectors, between the local and the global, among different scientific disciplines, among different sectors of knowledge, among different administrations, among different identities, among different states, etc. **All this mental, cultural, and institutional partitioning forms obstacles**, beyond the basic economic and political resistances, to our truly taking up our common challenges.

Thus, at the end of this second stage, we had an overall view of what it is urgent to undertake and of how the different actions are linked to each other.

We should be able to fill out this "table of contents" in the next few months with the contributions of the Proposal Papers of the Alliance, as well as the contributions of all initiatives and experiences. Each of these themes is an invitation to carry on.

The whole of this process of elaboration and discussion of the themes is already available in French and in English. It is both the "table of contents" of common strategies and a reminder of how this table of contents was defined. Using this same method, we shall present on the Alliance Web site the table of contents of the Alliance proposals. **Everyone will therefore be able to amend** and complete it in their own way by applying this same exercise at the regional and local scales, and **draw from it their own program of action**, which will be consistent with the others.

3. Regional stage: selecting priorities and outlining a plan of action for every region

The third stage is a **return to diversity**, no longer to a socioprofessional diversity but to a diversity of the contexts and regions of the world. Grouped together by region, the participants indicated their own priorities from among the seventeen common themes that were identified, then the specific priorities for their region. A plan of action per region was drawn on up on this basis.

II) After the Assembly

What now? What is the next stage? What will the follow-up be? This will depend on you, the Assembly participants, and all those who, over the years, have come to this forum of shared dialogue and work that is the Alliance.

An Alliance is not an institution, a movement, a political organization, or an NGO. It is a **place of freedom**; it is a **set of working methods** that are the prerequisites for democracy, efficiency, and sustainability; finally, it is the linking of a common aspiration to **provide sense** and build strength. The Alliance is no more than what the Allies wish to make of it.

We at the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation had made a moral commitment at the birth of the Alliance in 1994, which was to back it until the completion of the Earth Citizens' Assembly, of which this Lille Assembly is the symbol.

Asked in 1996 by the first core of Allies to specify our role, we had defined three priorities for the Foundation's commitment:

- **the enlargement of the Alliance** to include all social and professional circles and all the regions of the world, so as not to remain confined within activist circles and within the geocultural areas closest to us;
- an in-depth work on the **proposals**;
- and the holding of **the World Assembly**.

Tonight, we will have fully complied with our commitments. A new page is before us. It is blank. It up to all of us — all the Allies, all those who in some

form or another have shared in this adventure through a workshop, a socioprofessional network, or a meeting — to write it.

The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation will, of course, be associated with this new stage. As it did in 1996, it will use 2002 to define the position that it is prepared to take in this stage, and the priorities that it will support.

The first stage of the Alliance, from 1994 to 2001, required of us a strong dose of determination to get off the beaten paths, to build methods, to project itself into the future. For the second stage, we shall have to multiply the centers of initiative and to diversify the sources of funding. I sincerely believe that the process that we initiated together is **necessary, original, bears promise for the future, and has great potential**, even more so after this Assembly. It matches, after September 11, the three requirements of our time:

- to reject the simplistic analyses and antagonisms that can only lead to war and different forms of totalitarianism;
- to build dialog in a spirit of tolerance and respect for diversity;
- and not to remain confined to protest, demands, and resistance, but to build alternative perspectives. This is the only way to meet today's and tomorrow's requirements.

We, the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation the Progress of Humankind (FPH), will remain attached, on our part, to making sure that the Alliance is the open,

pluralistic, and democratic forum that it has been so far, where it is possible to work jointly on difficult subjects.

One day, an eminent member of our Council, somewhat annoyed at seeing that the Alliance Workshops had not yet defined perspectives, asked me: "What, finally, are the proposals of the Alliance?" My answer was: "They are the Alliance itself." At the time, this might have seemed like an evasive answer to cover up for our collective inability to have formulated proposals. But now that sixty Proposal Papers have been drafted, I can still say that the main proposal of the Alliance is the Alliance itself — not an "Alliance object," an "Alliance identity," a "monolithic Alliance," but an "Alliance process," an "Alliance state of mind," an "Alliance method," a mosaic of plural alliances such as those that were pictured, dreamed up, developed, or enhanced during the past eight days, thanks to the socioprofessional groups, the thematic workshops, and the regional and continental meetings.

The follow-up of the Assembly, as that of the Alliance, will be whatever you decide for yourselves. At the opening ceremony, I brought up several possibilities. A questionnaire was circulated on this subject but only about one hundred of you received it and filled it out. It will be published on the Web site and we shall turn it into a questionnaire for a much broader audience. It may

well be better to answer it later, at a quieter time. The answers we have received so far show, for a crushing majority, the desire for some form of follow-up.

Four perspectives raise an almost unanimous interest:

- **To extend and reinforce the socioprofessional networks.** Some of those here today have only just been initiated. The Assembly has been an opportunity to strengthen and enlarge several of those. The implementation, in every socioprofessional circle, of the Charter of Human Responsibilities, could be their ethical and intellectual core. In the proposals for a legitimate and democratic global governance, which was the subject of one of the Proposal Papers, we presented the idea that **socioprofessional communities**, made up of persons prepared to acknowledge each other within a same socioprofessional network and to assume its responsibilities with regard to society, could play a key role in such governance.
- **To provoke Regional Citizens Assemblies**, which, through the geographical and socioprofessional diversity of their members and perhaps through their methods, can prolong this first World Assembly.
- **To circulate the Proposals**, those drafted in the framework of the Alliance and those outlined in this Assembly. For this, the multilingual mapping tool used for the Assembly will be at your disposal in your

language so you can browse among the themes and establish the links among them.

- **To reinforce links with other initiatives.** The next opportunity for this will be the World Social Forum of Porto Alegre next January. I greet the presence at this Assembly of its Organization Committee members.

Many of us believe that there is a close complementarity among initiatives like the Alliance — which is a pluralistic and, as of this Assembly, a truly global forum of dialog, analysis, and elaboration of proposals — and initiatives like the World Social Forum, which is a forum of activist movements.

I even think that in the slow construction of a true globalization, of a socially responsible globalization, of an authentic world community that will be the great opening of the twenty-first century, **everyone is indispensable to everyone else.**

A fifth lead, which is to **turn the Web site into a public forum for discussion on the strategies**, turned up more skepticism. We do believe, however, that there is a need for crossroad-type forums.

All that remains now is for me to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the Regional Council of the Nord Pas de Calais, which backed us financially,

welcomed us on Sunday, and also allowed us to enjoy this magnificent place, the *Nouveau siècle*, and feel fully at home here for eight days. Our thanks to the French Secretary of state for Economy of Solidarity, who provided us with the ministry's financial support and has given us the pleasure of sharing with us this closing day of the Assembly. I would also like to extend our appreciation, once again, for the tremendous work accomplished by the students of the IUT of Valenciennes and by the young interpreters, who went from interpretation to translation and never stopped smiling despite the difficulty of this exercise. Thanks, too, to the participants for the numerous gifts they brought as a contribution to our universal heritage. Our gratitude to the DPH team, thanks to which one hundred reports relating the participants' experiences are already available in three languages. Our thanks to the organization team, which expended limitless energy, day and night, to work out the many difficulties as if by miracle.

Thank you.