

Alliance for a responsible, plural and united world

World citizens assembly

Lille December 2-10, 2001

Socioprofessional Group

LAWYERS AND MILITARIES

The workshop began with the introduction of one another. The meeting started faster than foreseen : from the start, the participants wanted to tackle the problem. During that introduction, we noticed the extraordinary quality and diversity of the group. One of the participants noted with humour that a few years before he was commanding French divisions which, in the hypothetical case of a war which finally had never taken place, would have had to fight Russian troops led by another general who was participating in the workshop : that irony of history showed how much the world had changed. During the following two days, we talked many times on the manner to manage those fundamental changes of the planet, and on how to carry weight on the coming transformations.

During the introductions and the following meeting, numerous ideas already emerged. Everyone came to discuss and share ideas and opinions. There were questions on the history of the Alliance and on the preparation of the Assembly. All in all, a large majority of the participants, on leaving, was convinced on the importance of the event and on the unforeseeable obstacles that would inevitably show up. Very quickly, some wanted to tackle the charter. At the logistical level, there was a little problem with the simultaneous translation. Nevertheless, the translators adapted themselves very quickly and so did the participants. As early as on the afternoon, everybody almost forgot the presence of the translators.

Then the post-it session began. Many knew and approved of this method. We managed to gather the suggestions in the four main lines, yet, we must note a concentration of the efforts in the Governance and Representation lines, then in Economics and Society, and few in Biosphere. About twenty five themes emerged from the session. A few examples : decentralization and democratisation, including in the armies; the promotion of a culture of peace and an education on environment; a reform of the United Nations; a control on the industrial processes; the setting up of a sustainable biological agriculture; the autonomy of territories.

The following day began with a reminder on the post-it exercise and with a discussion on the themes that had emerged the day before. The leader suggested to begin the debate on the line of Governance before tackling the other three lines. There was a consensus on starting the discussion on the question of the reform of the United Nations. The result was the following ideas :

The need to reform the Security Council, the need to set up an immediate military force of intervention, to create a representation adapted to the evolution of the world to create democratisation by abolishing the right of veto ; to give more power to regions ; to develop a separated juridical structure to support the United Nations and compel the States to abide by their resolutions; to increase the competences of the existing structures and create new ones.

We then carried on with the theme of conflicts' prevention and the conclusions were : the necessity to promote the efforts in favour of regionalization; to take into account regional co-responsibility; to eradicate weapons smuggling and tax havens; to impose democracy. A participant suggested the creation of another supranational entity, different from the United Nations and based on regional sets such as Europe. This assembly could be the springboard to develop that organism.

The following subject : peace culture. Here are the suggestions : to avoid war; reflection and reconciliation; transparency and democratic action; the idea that the security of man is the essence of a non-violent world; the education for a culture of peace; the establishment of the principle of an institutionalised dialogue.

The session ended with a suggestion for the period of time after the Assembly : the creation of permanent networks to have information circulate and carry on the debate.

Then we came to the long-awaited debate on the Charter deliberation from which many suggestions were made. No one questioned the fundamental principles of the Charter, yet all the participants made suggestions to modify certain articles, to include certain concepts such as tolerance, to clarify other concepts such as justice or human development. Often, the participants suggested new wordings. For instance the first article with a shorter wording : "No peace without justice." Several persons insisted on the idea of mixing both the third and the sixth articles. Some wanted to change one word, for example to change the word "establishment" by "setting up." (article 1) Others would like to add new clauses. For instance : "The fact that human beings live together is the basis of the existence of each human being" or "For coexistence and the lasting development of mankind, all measures should be taken to educate children to the sense of responsibilities and solidarity towards the plural world." The first workshop ended with this work.