

Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World

World Citizens Assembly

Lille – December 2nd to 10th, 2001

Thematic Group

Sciences and Technologies for Sustainable Development

Introducing the participants

The participants introduced themselves and explained their motivation for the choice of the theme "Sciences and Technologies for Sustainable Development" .

They respectively reported on the points which had been discussed in their previous workgroups and which seemed to be important to be brought up within the framework of this present theme.

Suggestions of the keywords of the discussion

The participants found that it was a good thing to expose right away their ideas and to discuss their priorities. The most interesting speeches were those of the Indian and Chinese farmers which dealt with the issue of local development.

Several participants insisted on starting the work by giving a precise definition of the phrase "Sustainable Development". Finally they seemed to reach a consensus which took into account the development and the welfare of the economy, the harmony with the biosphere and the fact of taking into account all the populations that are concerned.

The other points which were proposed were the following :

- An Ethical Science

GM food, cloning, chemical and biological weapons, etc...

- Solidarity and the transfer of knowledge from Northern to Southern countries.

This point deals with how science can contribute to development including the development within poor countries.

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Choosing the main lines

The lines that had been chosen at the end of the previous day were called into question. The interventions dealt with globalization, the equality between man and woman (Canadian intervention), local development (the Chinese and Indian farmers), the role of traditional knowledge (Africa and so on), land, water, industrial wastes, education and so on.

Finally the ideas were written down on Post-its and separated into different groups. Three lines were determined. Here they are with the corresponding themes :

- Line 1: Local approach of science versus global approach :

- Ethics at the core of Sustainable Development
- Local needs and diversity
- Scientific priorities for Sustainable Development
- Traditional knowledge for Sustainable Development
- Traditional knowledge and governance for Sustainable Development
- Science for peace
- Transfer of technologies for Southern countries
- To favour local scientific research
- Fast spreading of science results
- Scientific results for the benefit of humanity rather than for multinational companies and their shareholders

- Line 2: Scientific themes for Sustainable Development versus market scientific themes

- Alternative values that are necessary for Sustainable Development
- Sustainable Development and common values
- Responsibilities of the scientists towards the planet as a whole (homeland)
- Sustainable Development cannot be conceivable without a study on water and land and their active preservation and without being safeguarded from egoistic craving.
- Education to the environment for Sustainable Development and notably the young to create environment-caring habits and responsibility towards the environment.
- Appropriate technologies with the participation of the local population, as it is done in India (see : the ecological brazier “Chulha”.)
- Global management of wastes to prevent their exportation as the Summers doctrine directly puts it
- A world scientific orientation counsel so that the research lines be defined for the benefit of all
- Global management of the resources in order to limit squandering and mining exploitations which don't take into account the interests of the future generations.
- To eradicate poverty, which is the main factor of environmental depredation
- Universal refusal of the privatisation of the living
- Financial policy for Sustainable Development

- Line 3: Sustainable Development versus World financialisation

- The responsibility of scientists towards Sustainable Development and its promotion as eco-development in the meaning of Ignacy Sachs
- Man-woman equality
- Precaution principle and the humility of the scientists as pillars of Sustainable Development
- The unequal consumption of energy as a factor of discrepancy between men
- Declaration of the rights of nature
- The problem of the debt that de-structures the Southern countries
- Genuine solidarity and Sustainable Development
- Water, health and education as un-tradable goods under the care of and safeguarded by Humanity as a whole