

Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World

# World Citizens Assembly

Lille - December 2 to 10, 2001

Thematic Group

## World Governance: the World Economy, Multinational Companies, and New Regulations

A – Strategic Axes

Four strategic axes were defined on the basis of proposals submitted by various participants.

Axis 1: For a global governance of the economy based on a vision, a set of values, and reformed institutions and states.

### Vision

Develop a vision for a socioeconomy of solidarity and promote a summary meeting in 2004.

Promote a new international economic order based on cooperation and not on competition, rules for fair trade, human development, not the goal of material growth.

Implement a uniform coordination of the world financial system, controlled by democratic states and civil societies (multilateral approach), to serve the production and reproduction of life, and not as a goal in itself.

### Values

Global governance must be considered as a permanent process of building unanimity on the basis of national and cultural diversities.

The general interests of our world society should transcend particular, national, or corporatist interests.

By the very fact that they exist, any person is entitled to a minimum basic income, which should be sufficient for them to lead their life.

### Institutions

Where and how can we build a world democratic governance (actors, procedures, objectives)?

Reform the United Nations Charter.

Set up a world fiscal policy.

Democratize international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization and submit them to civil society, to ensure that human and social development is the purpose of economic activity and to guarantee an equitable world stability.

The United Nations must recognize the right of each individual to a basic minimum income.

Institutions and regulations, designed to be at the service of global governance, should be multi-member, plural, and democratic.

Establish income and wealth distribution systems that are not determined by individuals' contributions to production.

Local and human development should take place in the respect of national sovereignty.

Regional and continental integration and currencies.

World finance at the service of economies and of human beings and not a just business for personal benefits.

### State

Respect of national sovereignty and cultural plurality.

Participatory budget, for revenues as well as for expenses.

Rethink state prerogatives to adapt regulations from the local level up to the global level.

Some participants do not agree with the summary on global governance. It emphasizes the state and national sovereignty. This summary is not different from the status quo that we are seeking to change. We think that political institutions must be changed on a world level. The state is one of the actors, but there are also companies and citizens. The concept of solidarity is based on the improvement of technical resources to improve the welfare of citizens. If you focus mainly on the role of the state, you cannot build this type of solidarity. We need a model of world governance that enables us to reform the framework of international institutions. We must create the model of the world we wish to build. Can civil society create a political party to promote the concept of solidarity?

Axis 2: For regulations and corporate responsibility

Findings

Companies are economic, financial, social, and environmental actors simultaneously.

Transnational companies have a major influence on national states, on territorial development, on wars, on financial criminality.

Money is used for the production and the reproduction of life. Speculation, gambling, and usurious interests must be penalized.

A call for responsibility

Savings investors et future pensioners (information should be transparent)

Companies must fully assume all their social and ethical responsibilities

Social and political actors should collaborate and conduct a coordinated action to establish standards of social, environmental, and ethical responsibilities for economic and financial actors. Specific indicators should be developed for each actor.

Involve the ILO and trade unions in the necessary action to improve labor codes and certificates

Combine voluntary codes with state regulatory legislation.

Democratization and a control over management and over productivity gains.

A call for new regulations

New regulations that do not only involve national states and international organizations

Enforce current regulations, anti-trust laws, etc.

Usher in and promote a worldwide legislation to control transnational companies

Establish global social and environmental certifications.

Develop regulations with efficient measurement tools to control international companies.

A system of regulations for the activities of international companies and on financial transactions.

An international convention to regulate the activities of transnational companies

Basic services and resources should be regulated collectively by people themselves, and not only by the market.

Axis 3: For global economic policies based on solidarity

The Debt

There was a general agreement on the importance of this issue, on the fact that the debt is unfair and increases social injustice, but slight differences appeared among participants:

Some participants insisted on the illegitimate and usurious nature of the debt and insisted that it should therefore be cancelled.

Others sought to provide a framework for a debt cancellation or reduction: international arbitration and condition gradual cancellation to changes in the debtor countries (struggle against corruption, etc.), allocations for basic services (education, etc.), and new orientations for the future (new decision-making models), where responsibilities are shared between the state and civil society).

Organization of trade and unfair trade

Everyone agrees that inequity in world trade leads to poverty and violence.

Clarify the notions of fair and unfair trade and define what distinguishes these two practices.

Develop forms of fair trade.

Regulations for basic services.

#### Axis 4: For a more responsible society and a change in mentalities

##### Greater awareness through education

Help young people become aware that natural resources are limited, in order to rapidly become ethical consumers.

Encourage economic actors at the local level to assume their responsibilities. These actors should no longer be simple cogs in the economic machine but should actively control it. In this perspective, promote a form of education that develops their innovative capacities, combined research, and community spirit.

##### Promote human exchanges

Develop exchanges among people, NGOs, etc., to circulate information, experiences, and changes in behavior.

##### Information

All NGOs and poor people should have access to immediate and precise information on world finances and on how world financial resources are controlled.

##### Connecting local responsibility to a global perspective

Rehabilitate politics at a local level by ensuring an effective participation of citizens (in a political sense) in economic life, beyond merely casting a voting ballot. Citizenship does not consist in delegating someone to represent you but implies a daily involvement and participation in social life.

Connect local initiatives to a global perspective. Each citizen must be aware of this two-fold perspective. For example, a local experience such in economy of solidarity is a way both to solve local problems and to contribute to the emergence of a universal spirit.

### B – More concrete actions

#### Axis 1: Global governance

Promote the development of participatory budgets in order to consolidate democracy and ensure political transparency.

A greater representation of all countries in the Security Council, with rotation.

Foster coalitions and mobilizations of civil society that are capable of exerting pressure on national governments to compel them to represent their positions, which really meet social needs. Such pressures should concern international financial systems, as much as economic and political ones.

Circulate the work and the dialogue of the Alliance in each of our countries, present the principles, the vision, and the strategy of a socially responsible and plural and globalization in order to extend and strengthen the network that is already established, and plan a new important meeting for 2004.

Reproduce all the Groups, and Thematic and Socioprofessional Workshops in each of our countries, including them in a network, and apply the same methodology.

Identify institutions that share our vision of solidarity and of a responsible, plural, and united world.

Set up an alternative structure in charge of organizing a world conference in 2004.

The necessary change towards a responsible, plural and united world must be implemented and led by civil society.

Demand a reform of international financial institutions and, in particular, design a new tax policy allowing equitable development.

#### Axis 2: Regulations and the social responsibility of companies

Set up an international network of NGOs to gather information on the practices of multinational companies in order to identify them better and to control them. Through this network, poor people will be able to acquire a degree of control over these firms. Example of what "Agir Ici" did with oil companies in Chad. If it were a network operating on a world scale, it would be able to coordinate much more efficiently the information concerning a given company. The Alliance could initiate an international watch.

The press could organize to highlight such actions.

A guide on the practices of companies in developing countries in relation to social, environmental, and human criteria.

The idea of a Nobel Prize for a company whose practice would show more concern for the situation of local populations and for the environment.

Actively promote corporate responsibility.

Social activists should be encouraged to work in socially responsible companies.

Invite companies that apply principles of social responsibility to join the Alliance.

A new convention against the oppression exerted by multinational companies. Inform people that the OECD already focuses on the behavior of multinational companies. Immediate action is for us to strike an alliance with the OECD. This is very important, as we cannot measure social responsibility without having basic criteria.

#### Axis 3: Economic policies based on solidarity

Take action in favor of cancellation of the debt, condition the cancellation of the debt to the struggle against corruption, to the establishment of social services, etc.

Take action in favor of recognition of the social responsibility of both the North and the South, each side must struggle against corruption, and for the development of a responsible, plural and united world.

Establish a procedure for the creation of an international mutual fund which may be used as a model of a socially responsible institution. Inform people that such funds already exist: for example, there is an assistance fund for small companies in the Netherlands, and also an African fund financed by NGOs.

#### Axis 4: Social Responsibility of Citizens

Build a status of liberty in Lille, as was done in New York and in Rio.

Develop a campaign on a global level, but implemented in each local sector of our countries to elaborate basic indicators that enable local actors to ensure a better quality of life and social welfare. Indicators: infant mortality, unemployment, environmental pollution, participation of NGOs, nutrition. In each particular case, which indicators correspond to the specific local situation, in addition to general indicators?

Promote the development of indicators to measure the degree of social responsibility that company managers, politicians, and social leaders must reach. This responsibility should also be inseparable from a process of social participation: transparency, respect for workers, for the community, for customers

In order to create a broader mobilization, design a short and motivating slogan and a symbolic flag, so that the Charter of Responsibilities may find an echo in public opinion.

Initiate a program of exchanges focusing on all the components of social responsibility and highlighting the necessity of a responsible, plural, and united world. Some members have already implemented such programs.

Initiate an information-exchange network for Alliance members.