

## **“SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT” WORKSHOP**

### **SUMMARY OF THE BARCELONA MEETING**

#### ***1) The approach to the issue***

Human beings make an assault on nature in various ways, to the extreme of breaking the rules of certain fundamental natural mechanisms and endangering all living things, they worsen the inequalities between humans and cause a drop in the available natural resources. This has given rise to an ethical debate and the questioning of the efficiency of technology.

How, then, can we meet human needs, preserve the future and welfare of the coming generations and at the same time protect the environment? One answer that emerges is the concept of sustainable development, integrating all the multiple facets of the problem. And yet, if sustainable development requires special discussion, it is because it has one specific feature that surpasses the socio-economic dimension; the challenge of sustainability must mainly deal with the surpassing of the planet's load capacity.

But *“We do not believe in the possibility of achieving a form of sustainable development that respects the great ecological balances at the expense of excluding a good portion of the human race”*<sup>1</sup>. It is pointless to worry about the optimum ecological sustainability if we cannot guarantee the political sustainability of the system that is to preserve the environment; it is pointless to worry about the optimum social justice if we cannot guarantee the sustainability of the Earth's ecosystem in order to in turn guarantee the survival of the human race; it is pointless to worry about optimum economic growth if it causes a humanitarian catastrophe.

The concept of sustainable development, then, must be a holistic one; it must be sustainable development on the economic, ecological, social and political levels and it must respect cultural diversity.

Total sustainable development involves questioning two concepts that have hitherto been key to the modern notion of development: 1) the pseudo-law of “market self-regulation”; there is an intrinsic necessity for institutions to regulate the market and sustainable development must promote decentralised forms of development on a local scale; 2) The notion of “human insatiability” as the basis for the modern notion of “needs”; a sustainable cultural concept of needs must put the idea of the wealth of being above the wealth of having. Quality of life is not measured by the accumulation of goods and any quest for sustainability means redefining human needs in the context of the idea of sufficiency and the quality of social relations between “individuals”.

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<sup>1</sup> Platform of the Alliance for a Responsible and United World

The inequality that exists in the world generates a growth dilemma. On the one hand, we have the maximum limit of consumption of natural resources and pollution and waste production that humankind must not exceed. On the other hand, we have the minimum amount of use of natural resources necessary to live a decent life. For Europe, it is essential not to exceed the maximum; but for the countries of the South that have sunk into abject poverty, the problem is how to grow in order to at least reach the minimum level.

For centuries, the North has stripped the South of its human and natural resources, generating the enormous ecological debt incurred by the dominating North to the peoples of the South. Concern for sustainable development brings us face to face with the implicit unsustainability of industrial civilisation's behaviour under the hegemony of the North and its model of neoliberal globalisation.

We can lay down certain premises:

- 1) Globalisation is a new context; new in its sudden, abrupt change of scale, although as a trend it is not new.
- 2) Sustainability is either global or it is not and never will be.
- 3) The socio-economic sustainability of the thousands of millions of the poorest people on the planet requires local endogenous development in the South, in many cases, it must include economic growth, which must also be environmentally sustainable. But this would have to be accompanied by parallel downward trends (in terms of production and consumption) in the North, for global sustainability to exist.
- 4) The new communication technologies alter everything from production, labour and trade systems and relations to the network of relationships between cultures, ideas and people. Biodiversity (taken in the widest sense of the term and therefore also including its cultural connotations) is more endangered than ever.
- 5) The nation state has left the real economy absolutely deregulated. In the dominant discourse, "the Market" has been the *deus ex machina* that has taken the place wrenched from the State.
- 6) The structure of international institutions is based, as the name suggests, on nation states, thereby leaving the real global economy deregulated.
- 7) Proposals such as the abolition of external debt, the Tobin tax, reduction of work hours, making production sectors sustainable, knowledge and technology transfer, and so on, clash with the two previous premises.

A model of sustainable development must be able to meet the basic needs – housing, potable water, food, sanitary and hygiene conditions, energy, education, health, participation in decision-making – of disposed people. It must also adapt technology and lifestyles to suit the socio-economic and ecological possibilities and particularities of each region, make all costs only domestic costs and

make economic calculations of wastage and exploitation of natural resources, while respecting the cycles of the ecosystem. The challenge, then, is to introduce the principles of humanity, equality and responsibility into this view of development.

## ***2) Cultural diversity and sustainable development***

An alternative model to neoliberalism does not necessarily imply ***alternative single thinking***. **There are several alternatives for countries and regional/continental subsystems within the single world economic system. This implies the absence of closed economies and the existence of an international division of labour; but this does not mean a single form of socio-economic organisation within all the subsystems. History creates differences (of culture, of ethical and moral value systems, idiosyncrasies, “starting conditions”) that lead us to envisage a move away from the sovereignty of the Nation State towards People’s Sovereignty in the globalised world with reaffirmation and tolerant coexistence of cultural nationalisms. We must block the way to attempts at hegemony that pursue an objective of cultural uniformity as an instrument of power. Cultural diversity is a source of global sustainability.**

However, the technological reality underlying globalisation, the effects of cultural syncretism that are unavoidable in the globalisation of multimedia communication and the world’s inexorable **ecological interdependence all go to define a set of parameters that are shared by all of humankind and are inescapable in any model of socially, economically and politically sustainable development.**

## ***3) Definition of some of the features of a model of total sustainable development***

We believe that the following are some of the features of any particular local model of socially, economically, ecologically and politically sustainable development:

***Socially sustainable*** means that it is socially just and that socially, it exists peacefully, but it also means that both these dimensions must be inextricably linked. Social sustainability demands that economic development not generate humanitarian disasters caused by marginalisation and exclusion. That which destroys a sector of humanity through the absence of egalitarian income distribution mechanisms cannot be termed socially sustainable development. The deterioration of the environment and the growth of poverty must be treated in an integrated manner. This does not mean mixing up the holistic concept of sustainability with that of justice; sustainability can actually be defined as a feature of a just social order.

Environmental management has always been limited to the state of social relations. This relationship is dialectic as, if the environment leads to a particular form of social organisation, for the latter to reproduce, it must in turn involve some use of nature.

We may ask ourselves if sustainability is the art of leveraging imbalances in a positive way. And we may reply that feeding, protecting and sustaining social bonds forms the cultural basis from which to confront the problem successfully.

***Economically sustainable*** means clearly distinguishing two types of issues. Firstly, it means distinguishing between development and growth. While growth implies an increase in size due to accumulation of materials, with the quantitative change predominating, development means an expansion of potential, in which qualitative change predominates. Secondly, we need to distinguish between what Aristotle called *economy* and what he called *chrematistics*, which is the art of obtaining and earning money through manipulation of prices.

Economic sustainability cannot base itself on limitless quantitative growth. Neither can it be measured by the evolution of financial earnings. The problem that concerns us is the *physical economy*, in other words, the product of goods and services in the actual and not the accounting sense of the word, as well as its effect on quality of life and not on the amount of stocks. This is when the concept of economic sustainability starts to make sense, because we have to take into account not only what was produced but also what was destroyed during the production process and what was wasted during consumption. With *physical economics*, we must also take into account all the problems linked to energy, which physically behaves in such a way as to refer us back to *entropy*, the point at which the economy and ecology meet.

Entropy is a measure indicating the amount of disorder, degradation and loss of non-recoverable energy as work that is involved in the dynamics of any physical or chemical system. All forms of energy gradually turn into heat and some heat disperses irretrievably. The physical reality of entropy is also present in the problem of environmental pollution and what is irreversible are the qualitative changes directly affecting the balance of the earth's ecosystem in a way that compromises human subsistence.

Given the possibility that the qualitative issues can alter the quantitative concerns, we should ask ourselves: What is being produced? Why and for whom is it being produced? How is it being produced?

A *per capita* sustainable economic development must pay heed to various situations and factors. It implies the growth of the available amount of goods and services needed for those who currently lack them, with special priority for communities whose very basic needs are not being met. For those who are not lacking in the basic necessities, improvements in quality and not in quantity must

be the goal, especially when it comes to durable goods. A parallel quantitative decrease will even have to accompany the necessary growth to cover the basic needs that are not met in deprived societies. As a whole, global quantitative growth must be subordinate to the restrictions of ecological sustainability. This means fairly redistributing world wealth, so that the polluting rich are less polluting and less rich. In all circumstances, sustainable economic development requires that we neither sacrifice the quality of life of present generations nor mortgage the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own quality of life.

**Ecologically sustainable** means that the development trend should not undermine the type of dynamic balance of the earth's ecosystem that is needed for the survival of the human race (ecosystems assimilate the leftovers of economic activity and carry out other essential tasks of the economy, including health and biological diversity aspects). This, from a physics point of view, and bearing in mind that humankind has already gone "beyond the limits of growth", implies that production input must meet three conditions relating to the rate of sustainable exploitation or emission per unit of time:

- The rate of use of renewable resources – land, air, forests, fish – must be lower than their respective rate of regeneration.
- The rate of use of non-renewable resources – fossil fuels, high-purity minerals, fossil water from the subsoil – should not exceed the rate at which they develop their renewable replacements. As the renewable replacements are made with the expense of more energy consumption, increasing entropic pollution, this condition is linked to the following.
- The rate of emission of pollutants must be lower than the rate at which they can be recycled by the environment, including the reversal of the warming of the atmosphere.

Meeting these essential requirements for ecological sustainability means acknowledging the existence of physical restrictions for the world economy, independently of the *chrematistic* reasons. The environmental sustainability capacity and the sustainable exploitation rates can be roughly defined in physical terms: the ecosystem doesn't grow and the economy, as a subsystem of the ecosystem, becomes larger in relation to it. So we have to think in terms of two optimums; optimum allocation and an optimum scale, bearing in mind that the very notion of a social optimum presupposes a value judgement and not a technical conclusion. The autonomous workings of the market are unable to take us either to optimum allocation or to an optimum scale. The optimum scale is linked to efficiency of the system, in which the political and economic factors subject to ecological restrictions are inseparably joined.

**Politically sustainable** implies that the dynamics of the social, economic and ecological system do not generate accumulative tension, conflicts and discontent, which make the political system so-

cially dysfunctional and lead to political instability, with potentially destructive consequences due to violent outburst of accumulative tension. If a system respects the notion of justice that is culturally accepted in its own context, conflictive tension can only be overcome satisfactorily if social dialogue agencies exist; the evolution of political practice requires knowledge of any “disensus” which is the expression of diversity and the driver of the dynamics of change in social behaviour. Moreover, the foundation for effective political participation is economic independence, in other words, liberation from the state of need experienced by those who only have the strength of their work to sell as a means of ensuring their physical subsistence. This liberation includes the ability to ensure each person (by means of non-labour revenue as an unconditional right of citizenship for all), the ability to consume in order to meet basic needs, independently of work, which, in turn, must also be distributed.

The idea of sustainability, then, leads us back to a debate within society, at the service of democracy, which rests on participation in political decision-making at every level, particularly at the grass roots. However, this grass roots level represented by the majority of the poor and illiterate is seldom trained for this. With the conviction that development will not be sustainable if people do not undergo in-depth change, just like the institutions in which they will be immersed and the society that surrounds them, it is necessary to plan actions that take each of these dimensions as an objective to focus on.

Any thought of sustainable development forces us to refuse the economical and technical yoke and return to the supremacy of politics, which implies the supremacy of the *polis*, i.e., the community being managed on the basis of the common good under the rule of the will of society. A solid basis for political sustainability requires that we redefine political participation on the municipal level, as it is in the local sphere that community life expresses itself most directly. For this, we need to encourage residents’ participation in the whole set of problems relating to raising quality of life for families, society and institutions.

#### **4) *Morality and sustainable development***

The sustainability of development presupposes a concern for the future of the Earth’s ecosystem and the survival of the human race. But there is no rational argument (and much less an economic one) justifying the sacrifice of present-day human consumption as a commitment to the future. There are no scientific reasons suggesting that the unborn generations will be better off being born than if they are not born at all. Moreover, science and technology, which feed back into the model of unsustainable growth, have no relation either to ethics or to politics.

A moral and political objective is needed to carry out sustainable development, amongst other reasons because the latter requires intergenerational justice. Preserving the rights of future generations brings us face to face with the absence of any political institutions that represent the future. Only our morality, understood here as the set of social behaviours based on a system of values, can defend the rights of the unborn generations or the rights of other living species.

It is interesting to see that the age-old traditional archetype of human beings' "moral debt" is the ethical mirror image of the physical and chemical limitations of the Earth. In effect, to observe the first empirical fact of humanity consists in seeing that man owes his life to another and he is therefore born morally indebted. In terms of ecology, this means that on the planet-scale, he should concern himself first and foremost with the sustainability of the environment in which he was given life and only later for economic development for his own comfort, with the explicit exception already made of basic unmet needs, required for the subsistence of millions of human beings and for the equalising justice between the spendthrift rich and the starving poor.

***5) Is it possible to make the consumer lifestyle a common one for the whole planet without putting the reproduction of the biosphere and the life of future generations at risk?***

**The obvious answer to this question is NO.**

We might associate poverty with existential insufficiency (physiological and/or psychological), but poverty is always relative: we are poor insofar as we have unfulfilled aspirations. To aim for sustainable production, above all we have to aim for sustainable consumption, and this requires a culture of sufficiency and not insatiability.

Neoliberal globalisation creates a two-tiered society with a rich, spendthrift and polluting minority and a majority that supplies a cheap workforce based on under-consumption. This has led to a war of competitiveness based on *social and ecological dumping*. Consumerism, instilled as a value in our ethical sensibilities over the last few decades, intensified the destruction of natural resources, **favours the two billion consumers in the richer countries, whose production/consumption/waste dynamics feeds the destruction of the environment. The two-tiering of humanity, with its dialectical dynamics of "consumerism – under-consumption", becomes the driving force behind mass migration from South to North and from East to West. The inability to absorb the marginalized into opulent society, which, also tending toward the two-tiered model, generates Fourth World pockets in Europe and the U.S.**

Infinite growth in consumption is not sustainable. Even the current levels of consumerism cannot be maintained. Neither is there any viability in the idea of ending world poverty to equal the con-

sumerist model from the top down through sustained economic growth of the current industrial model, however much concern or respect for the environment you may add.

We believe that it will not be enough to question a logic that leads us to unsustainable use of nature. There must also be a reassessment of social relations and the world economic system that make them possible.

#### ***6) Which lifestyles and levels of consumption would be sustainable and desirable?***

The analysis of resource consumption highlights the existence of economic excess. The dynamics of the system depend on the way these excesses are used. They can be invested and consumed in one way or another, including possibilities that range from investing the surplus in the arms industry to ultimately destroy overproduction, to greater enjoyment of free time with less consumerism, reducing the production of excess.

It seems obvious to say that the possibilities for using surplus for destruction of any type or form are neither desirable nor sustainable. Sustainability presupposes peaceful global harmony among a diversity of forms of development, the adaptation of the various human organisations to their particular ecological environment and, therefore, the diversity of lifestyles and consumption levels. We have to leave behind the modern view of a historically uniform and linear development and look at the diversity of social organisations that are possible in history and ecologically desirable. There is no single desirable form of sustainable lifestyle.

#### ***7) What are the indispensable and legitimate limits to growth for socially and environmentally sustainable development?***

Economic growth according to the neoliberal model of single thinking is neither socially, nor **economically, nor ecologically nor politically sustainable.**

The growth trend for the coming decades will be a multiplication of the demand for energy and other natural resources. But this clashes with the sustainability of the earth's ecosystem and its need for this consumption to be halved. If significant reductions in the current flow of materials and energy are not made, the most likely future for the current model over the next few decades will be a per capita decrease in food production, industrial production and energy use, alongside accelerated environmental decline.

The change of trend would involve a change both of the dominant technologies and the hegemony of cultural values, and also the social/national relations of the world system.

From a technical point of view it is possible to respect the physical limits of the ecosystem by reducing the flow of resources consumed and pollutants emitted and simultaneously increasing the



quality of life of humanity as a whole. The condition for this possibility is a speedy and drastic increase of efficiency, from the ecological point of view. We might say that technically we have sustainable development when, globally, the rate of improved technological efficiency (in ecological terms) is greater than the rate of economic growth.

It should be pointed out here that one must distinguish between efficiency of the system as a whole and efficiency on the micro-economic level. Growth limits impose a need for efficiency in both senses.

Efficiency of the system refers us back to a model of sustainable globalisation, which requires a new international economic order based on diversity, with a sense of justice, and structured on solidarity and co-operation.

In the micro-economic sense, it is possible to promote an *efficiency revolution*, sustained by the ecological demands, technological advances and change of the consumerism trend, by:

- a) Rerouting technological progress. There are specific studies that prove the feasibility of a *revolution in energy production, a revolution in material productivity* and a *revolution in transport productivity*.
- b) Ensuring that the efficiency revolution is profitable. Economic incentives are a reality that can be managed on the basis of the efficiency revolution. If a company has to conduct its trade relations in a “socially responsible” manner, there has to be a logic that can be translated into current or future earnings and the survival of the company. The fact that an activity either is or is not lucrative depends on relative pricing and this is the result of revenue policy administered by the political powers. The efficiency revolution can be made profitable by combining measures such as the withdrawal of subsidies for the use of certain resources, education on consumption, management of demand, cost minimisation planning, high taxation on solid waste, environmental auditing and environmental tax reforms.

It is the capitalist economies of the richest countries that have the most polluting lifestyle in the world and consequently, it is they that should give most priority to improving technological efficiency, in terms of the environment, so their economic growth must decrease, while increasing the range of services and welfare, altering the pattern of wasteful consumption at the same time as they improve their quality of life. On the other hand, by changing the quality of life for the section of humanity that lives in poverty, the poorer economies could enjoy an economic growth that is more rapid than the progress of environmental efficiency of the technology that they use, covering their basic and unmet needs. The planet as a whole would then be ecologically sustainable, more egalitarian and with a better quality of life for all of humankind.

### **8) How do we reconcile preservation of the environment with the economic development of the South?**

In the capitalist model, nature, as a means of production, is a mere resource for achieving economic profit. The model of savage capitalism that has predominated with globalisation takes this abuse of nature beyond the limits of sustainability of the Earth's ecosystem. But the backbone of this perverse globalisation is the loss of monetary sovereignty at the hands of speculative financial globalisation. So *globalisation of solidarity* compatible with total sustainable development calls for a new International Monetary System, based on shared worldwide monetary sovereignty, as a way of subordinating financial globalisation to fair and sustainable production globalisation. This will also allow us to control the *deterioration of exchange terms* suffered by the countries of the South, which tends to be compensated for by fiscal, social and ecological *dumping*.

The democratic sovereignty that is kept in the context of *fair globalisation*, resides in self-determination and the chance to choose an efficient specialisation through which to integrate into the globalised production system. That way, each country's production efficiency will depend on the social/economic/political system in force being appropriate to maximum use of its own potential. This will give rise to genuine *competitive advantages*, generated through the training and specialisation, the fruit of education and public health policy, research and development policy, industrial policy, etc. It's very important to emphasise here that the co-operative participation of workers is a source of competitive advantage.

Just as micro-economic efficiency is achieved on the basis of co-operative participation, a macroeconomic system that benefits from co-operative participation can also be implemented. But naturally, this requires that we leave the field of *pure economics*. The organisations of macroeconomic co-operative participation must be compatible with (and the other side of the coin to) the building of social participation in the political power held by institutions. They lie in the old concept of *comparative advantage* based on natural geographic conditions has always been that the Southern nations got the "comparative advantage in raw materials", while the Northern states got the "comparative advantage of industrial development". This is even more unacceptable when this supposed comparative advantage is linked to the exploitation of non-renewable natural resources, which implies that, at a certain moment when the raw material runs out, the best decision made by the world market is for that society to disappear, drowned in famine and poverty. But the fact that a country possesses certain natural resources does not mean it has any obligation (or right) to have to exploit them unscrupulously and mankind cannot commit the ecological folly of forcing certain countries to fall into this pillaging out of necessity.

Without believing that the global clash of interests will just disappear, it seems reasonable to say that a new form of institutionalism in accordance with the need to govern globalisation must accept that global sustainability demands a degree of co-operation to replace certain practices of authority. In this sense it's worth highlighting that co-operative advantage directly correlates to efficiency of the system and the ecosystem.

If the International Monetary and Credit System were managed by a supranational multilateral monetary authority with the existence of imperialistic financial metropolises, exchange terms would be free from manipulation by interested parties. If, as well as this, there were policies to counteract fiscal social and environmental dumping (both with national self-defence measures and international penalisation measures) then the only restriction to freely choosing a specialisation for economic development would be *genuine efficiency*, in other words, the ability to produce at the lowest cost with the best technology or the best management or the best workforce training or the best salary and standard of living incentives for workers.

In the economic development of the South, the preservation of the environment is not independent of the preservation of social rights and the structural suppression of financial dependence. Independence and political and economic self-determination are necessary (although not sufficient) conditions for this sustainable form of development. As a counter-example, take the non-sustainability inherent in colonialist pillaging.

### **9) In total sustainable development, how do we tackle North-South relations and the solution to the South's external debt problem?**

The hostility of the North begins when the South is forced to enter the rationale of the North.

The issue of External Debt is hardly mentioned in discussions on sustainability. The payment of "interest on the interest" of External Debt causes an authentic social genocide in the poorer nations. Just as the perpetrators of these crimes on humanity deserve to be subjected to the verdicts of an International Criminal Court (in the process of being set up) it would also be appropriate that financial criminals to account for themselves at an International External Debt Court after sacking the wealth of the peoples of the South.

But just condoning the debt does not open the path to sustainability because it doesn't change the concept of development that the North has imposed on the South. If global sustainable development is possible, it will be on the condition that we decrease the flow of cheap energy that continues to move from South to North just like in colonial times, in order to change the material basis of the consumerism of the richest and most polluting peoples. A new world stage thus requires that the reformulation of the International Monetary System be founded without the burden of the current fi-

nancial (but not real!) debt that the South today bears and that it begin to repay the ecological debt (real but not featuring in the accounts!) that the North has owed for centuries.

We believe that there will be no sustainable solutions to international environmental problems as long as the position of all the weakest ones in the global system is not strengthened.

### ***10) Education for sustainability***

A responsible and united world will not be possible if people's consciousness cannot analyse the implications of their actions on the environment, in collaboration with production, social and political organisations. This awakening of conscience should be possible for all human beings from their earliest childhood, thanks to free education in situational analysis. The way to approach this education, without forgetting each people's internalisation of their culture, is to include worldwide components approved by all educators.

Sustainability education has to be put into context, stressing the new ways of perceiving needs and use of resources. It must simultaneously focus on two aspects: a) teaching of certain values that reinforce awareness of our responsibility in total sustainable development and b) teaching of useful knowledge for sustainability problem solving.

Teaching of a values system centres on respect and solidarity with our neighbour, learning how to integrate all the living beings that make up our environment into this community, and even love of inorganic nature. In contrast, this means replacing individualist competitiveness and rivalry or egoistical desires to dominate. Re-evaluating personal thought on these values is the first step on the road towards discovering the wealth of being above the wealth of having.

Imparting useful knowledge means adopting sustainable conduct in the conservation of potable water and fertile soil, halting the advance of desertification or preserving public health, not only against known epidemics but also against the new diseases deriving from use of technology in food production or those generated by the poor quality of life in urban/industrial civilisation. With respect to this, it is necessary to re-evaluate the traditional knowledge acquired by mankind over the millennia.

We need to globalise the problem of sustainable development from the moment a child starts school, adapting the curriculum so that its content includes subjects relating to Sustainable Development; these shall be given across the board in an inter-disciplinary fashion and thus interrelating the concepts of: Sustainable Development – Unsustainable Growth; Social Inclusion – Social Exclusion; Responsible Consumption – Irresponsible consumerism; Globalisation with Solidarity – the South's External Debt; Respect for the Environment – Materials and Energy Flow to the North; etc., in which the pupil shall learn to become an active player in his or her own development.

### ***11) Who can put this model of total sustainable development into practice?***

The global change required is possible if, inside the Nation States, social forces crystallise and projects are shaped that are able to act as a vehicle for the necessary reforms. However, a widespread phenomenon has corroded the capacity for change of our political powers while managing the State: corruption, the other aspect of “the death of ideologies” with the imposing of *single thinking*.

State corruption means a decrease in the political will to improve quality of life for the marginalized social classes, respect for the environment and the safeguarding of the rights of future generations. Corruption of the political and trade union leadership and independent journalism makes it easy for institutions to cover up or disguise information critical of the governing system or marginalize individuals promoting a way of thinking or political movements for change. It would seem necessary, then, to provide an alternative to the political society that today uses corruption to lay down its law and in fact, civil society has begun to generate new forms of expression and action.

The protagonists of this change are no longer exclusively the traditional political parties or the trade unions, or the worker’s movement as “necessary historic element for inexorable and predetermined change”. Other players have taken on new prominence, one that tends to question the hegemonic order of “single thinking”. NGOs, social movements and civil society organisations are becoming increasingly important, alongside the self-transformation awareness of the socio-political actors of the previous model of confrontation.

But the prestigious and praiseworthy task of the intermediary institutions, NGOs and other examples of what is known as the “third sector” will fully meet their objectives when they materialise into a single political project that will include them and represent them, which does not necessarily mean a new political party in the traditional sense. The fact is that politics is still a power struggle and only with people power can one defeat the powers that are more concerned with keeping up the dynamics of unsustainable globalisation.

Within this logic, the implementation of legal frameworks and especially mechanisms for civil society consensus and action, with rights and authority to have an effect on State policy-making and as a way of participating in community life on the local level, is a new path that might reformulate democratic participation. On the basis of this, it would then be possible to reconstruct the bases of a new form of governability, seen as a set of processes initiated and controlled by the social players.

Lately there have been some global reactions to this model of concentration of capital. There have been demonstrations against events held by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the WTO and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment that took place in Seattle, Davos, Prague, etc

Recently, in a more institutionalised manner and with proposals for a global alternative to this neo-liberal capitalism, the World Social Forum met in Porto Alegre, and made contributions to the building of a world, on the basis of rights and not of finance. One aspect that stood out, as an alternative strategy to the current model, was how to give back democracy to people's organisations within civil society. We believe it's a good idea to strengthen the initiative of the World Social Forum and propose the total sustainable development option in this arena.

## **12) Proposals for change**

- a) To move towards a new system of procedures and institutions for world governability.
- b) To reform the system of international institutions in such a way as to foster some democratic balance of global political, economic, legal powers, etc. To complete the international organisation that is the UN, incorporating the notion of a world parliament able to reconcile the requirements of universalism and the diversity of historical and cultural heritage. Hold a world conference to reformulate the International Monetary System and restructure the agencies created in the now outdated Bretton Woods system.
- c) The political institutions of a new global order would then manage a wide and absolutely public sector, global public goods such as for example, the atmosphere, outer space, the oceans and biodiversity, peace and even cultures.
- d) Implementation, collection and management of international taxes, for example the Tobin tax, that would finance endogenous local sustainable development processes in the South. Establish import taxes against *social and ecological dumping*.
- e) Global regulation of the principles of safeguarding the ecosystem and mankind, moderation in consumption, precaution, protection of diversity, citizenship, minimisation of emission of pollutants, co-operation, polluter-payer policies not only at a microeconomic level but also on the level of the State and continental organisations, thereby preventing denaturalisation and a "license to pollute". "Global citizenship" can help to redress the imbalance between capital and labour on a global level; what holds people to their country of origin should not be the legal impossibility of emigrating, but the total sustainable development of their own land.
- f) A possible reform (albeit insufficient) to mitigate the culture of having and the creation of the symbolic value of goods would be the introduction of a tax on the advertising revenue of the media and gradual taxes on advertising-related activities (reaching 80%-90% of the revenue). This would also stimulate greater media independence from its advertising revenue and thereby a press that is less closely linked to the interests of corporations and hegemonic institutions.

- g) The above not only allows for less tendentious information to be created and disseminated, but it would also increase the relative competitiveness of the autonomous, non-mercantile media. The creation of alternative interactive channels of social communication (community radio, the Internet, popular press and graphic media) based on a new concept of social justice and the man/nature relationship must play a very important role in promoting sustainable development.
- h) While generating sustainable production systems and rational change processes in land use, it is necessary to optimise the mechanisms of alert, prevention, resolution and mitigation of natural and anthropogenic disasters.
- i) Actions must be planned to oppose the offensive carried out by monopolies and backed up by the countries that play a central role in the patenting business, in the two-faced and perverse mechanism of taking ownership of the people's knowledge on the basis of economic interests and in the aim of then imposing their patenting rights on knowledge and goods that are the property of society.
- j) Promote the creation of an International Court on Southern External Debt Legitimacy. A moratorium on debt payment until this Court distinguishes between the real amount of legitimate debt from the unlawful debt will in turn provide funding for local endogenous sustainable development process in the South.