Urgent Appeal to Change the Mindset

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio 2012, must change the dominant mindset by:

Restoring public rights over corporate privileges

after thirty years of strengthening the power of investors and big corporations through deregulation, trade and financial liberalization, tax cuts and exemptions, and weakening the role of the state; and after the market-driven financial meltdown.

The principles and values of the Rio Declaration and the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of states and governments, are threatened and urgently need to be re-established. They include Human Rights, Freedom, Equality, Solidarity, Diversity, Respect for Nature, and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. Corporate interests do not uphold these principles and values.

Taking equity seriously

after thirty years of policies that further widened the gap between rich and poor and have exacerbated inequities and inequalities, not least regarding access to resources.

Unbridled market forces have favored the strong, thereby widening the economic divide. This requires the state to redress the imbalance, eliminate discrimination, and ensure sustainable livelihoods, decent work and social inclusion. Intergenerational justice requires restraint and responsibility of the present generation. It is urgent to establish more equitable per capita rights towards the global commons and to the emission of greenhouse gases, taking fully into account historical responsibility.

Rescuing nature

after more than sixty years of global warming, loss of biodiversity, desertification, depletion of marine life and of forests, a spiraling water crisis and many other ecological catastrophes.

The environmental crisis is hitting the poor much more than the affluent. Knowledge-intensive solutions including technologies are available to restore natural systems, and dramatically reduce pressures on climate and the environment while improving human well-being. A “green economy” is attainable but must be embedded in a holistic concept of sustainability. What we need is a change of lifestyles.


This appeal was formulated by the following members of the Reflection Group on Global Development Perspectives:

Albert Recknagel, terre des hommes Germany; Alejandro Chanona, National Autonomous University of México; Barbara Adams, Global Policy Forum; Beryl d’Almeida, Abandoned Babies Committee Zimbabwe; Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network; Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, International Resource Panel; Filomeno Sta. Ana III, Action for Economic Reform; George Chira, terre des hommes India; Gigi Francisco, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era; Henning Melber, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation; Hubert Schilling, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; Jens Martens, Global Policy Forum Europe; Jorge Ishizawa, Proyecto Andino de Tecnologías Campesinas; Karma Ura, Centre for Bhutan Studies; Roberto Bissio, Social Watch; Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, Tebtebba Foundation; Yao Graham, Third World Network Africa

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