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World Wisdom Council THE BUDAPEST DECLARATION

Wisdom at the Tipping Point

Shifting to New Thinking and a New Civilization

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THE BUDAPEST DECLARATION

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“Where there is no vision, the people perish”
Proverbs 29:18, Old Testament

“No problem can be solved from the same level
of consciousness that created it”
Albert Einstein

1. We, the members of the World Wisdom Council, are committed to the reversal of current trends towards chaos and destruction. We believe that the world can be constructively changed; a new civilization can be created. We call on governments, businesses, educators, artists, scientists, activists and all concerned citizens to join their commitment to ours. We call on people in every walk of life to become aware of the critical nature of the world situation and use the power of new thinking and acting to bring about the necessary changes.
2. The wise people of all traditions have admonished us to see humanity as one family, to honor the sanctity of life and creation, to nurture love and compassion and to apply the golden rule of treating others as we want to be treated ourselves. For the first time in history, the application of this wisdom is not only a precondition of personal growth and fulfillment, but also a precondition of human survival.
3. Neither breakdown in chaos nor breakthrough to a new civilization is fated. The future is not to be foretold, it is to be created. It can be decisively formed by every human being endowed with both consciousness and conscience. There are workable alternatives to the way we do things in the world today that could help us deflect the trends that move us toward crisis and pave the way toward a more sustainable and peaceful new civilization.
4. A basic *cause* of unsustainability is the dysfunctional and egocentric thinking that gives rise to perceptions and priorities that lead to destructive conduct. The basic *remedy* is the transformation of the prevalent mindset. In this context “mindset” embraces rational as well as intuitive, cognitive as well as emotional elements: the full scope of human consciousness.
5. Humanity’s great wisdom traditions, east and west, north and south, concur that asking fundamental questions is a vital step in the awakening of wisdom, as they help us see and experience the essential link between our consciousness and its immediate tangible effect on our life. These questions awaken higher, more integral forms of intelligence that can initiate the solution, dissolution and resolution of the problems we all currently face.

6. There are some fundamental questions we need to ponder. They include questions such as:

- > Can we make wealth, power, and technology serve us, instead of enslaving us?
- > Can we have peace within and among ourselves without living in peace with nature?
- > Can we have a peaceful and sustainable world without understanding how others view the world?
- > Can we afford to ignore the intrinsic wisdom present in traditional cultures and present also in young children when it comes to conducting our life in modern societies?
- > Must we not question whether modern practices truly bring justice to law, healing to medicine, and sustainability to the conduct of politics and business?
- > Can we transform in time the prevalent glorification of greed, lust and power into a mindset hallmarked by dedication to justice for everyone, and respect for all people whether they live in our culture and society or in others?

There are also more practical questions we should ask. For example: Where is the wisdom in a system that —

- > Produces weapons that are more dangerous than the conflicts they are meant to solve and substitutes a cult of violence for a culture of peace?
- > Continues to undervalue women and abandons half of its children in poverty and hunger?
- > Creates an overproduction of food, but fails to make it available to the hungry?
- > Ignores the very principles of fairness and justice that we ask our children to follow?
- > Expects individuals to abide by the golden rule of treating others as they would be treated themselves, yet ignores this elementary rule of fairness in relations among states and among businesses?
- > Faces a gamut of tasks and challenges, yet puts more and more people out of work?
- > Requires unrelenting economic and financial growth for it to function and not to crash?
- > Faces long-term structural and operational problems, yet bases its criteria of success on short-term accounting periods and the day-to-day behavior of stock exchanges?
- > Assesses social and economic progress in terms of the gross national product and leaves out of account the quality of life of the people and the level of fulfillment of their basic human needs?
- > Gives full priority to maximizing the productivity of labor (even though millions are unemployed or underemployed) rather than improving the productivity of resources (notwithstanding that most natural resources are finite and many are scarce and nonrenewable)?
- > Fights religious fundamentalism but enshrines “market fundamentalism” (the belief that the market can right all wrongs and solve all problems)?

7. We conclude that the question is no longer *whether* a fundamental change is coming, but whether the change will be *for the better* or *for the worse*, *when* it will be coming and *at what price*. The sooner we pave the way to positive change, the less traumatic will be the transformation and the smaller its human, economic and ecological cost. All of us now share the responsibility of realizing that we live at the tipping point of contemporary civilization and for recognizing that informed thinking and responsible acting are needed to bring us to the threshold of a civilization that is truly peaceful and sustainable.

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Annex

Global Dangers, Requirements, and Policy Recommendations

(1) DANGERS

The following is a brief and non-exhaustive catalogue of the trends that drive our world toward crisis:

- > Higher levels of frustration and discontent as the distribution of wealth and power becomes more and more concentrated and the gap increases between the owners of wealth and holders of power and the poor and marginalized segments of the population.
- > Greater propensity in many peoples of the world for resorting to terrorism and other forms of violence to right wrongs and call attention to the perceived wrongs.
- > The creation of new, usable nuclear weapons and the doctrines that view such weapons as legitimate means of pre-empting threats and fighting wars.
- > Growing islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East, accompanied by religious and ideological extremism in industrialized countries.
- > Deepening personal and national insecurity in countries both rich and poor.
- > Increasing levels of conflict in the Middle East, Asia, Central America, and other hot-spots.
- > Historically highest levels of military expenditures and stockpiling of nuclear, biological and conventional weapons.
- > Untenable pressures in the international financial system.
- > Continued degradation of vital balances in the world's atmosphere, in the oceans and fresh-water systems, and in productive soils.
- > Worldwide drop in food self-sufficiency coupled with the diminution of the available food reserves.
- > Diminution of available fresh water for over half the world's peoples.
- > Continued disregard of environmental objectives inasmuch as they restrain economic growth.
- > Attempts to place increasing restrictions on civil liberties, including free speech and freedom of expression in the press and on the Internet.

(2) REQUIREMENTS

In view of a plethora of dangerous trends, it is becoming urgent, among other things, to:

- > Shift substantial amount of expenditure from weaponry to global problem solving.
- > Shift toward politics based on culture with values aligned with 21st century requirements, including increased public accountability for improving the quality of life.
- > Shift the basis of industrial economies from “natural capital” (the accumulated riches of the earth) to “natural income” (resources that can be renewed, replenished, or recycled), and from matter and energy-intensive goods and production processes to those based on knowledge and information.
- > Remedy crisis-creating imbalances in the world’s financial system by reforming the international currency system and abolishing usury.
- > Evolve the institutions of world governance in regard to global challenges and opportunities, inter alia by strengthening the system of the United Nations.
- > Use global media and emergent technologies of global education for raising the level of consciousness in society.
- > Develop and strengthen globally responsible leadership-competence at all levels of business and society.
- > Launch cooperative “learning expeditions” focused on high-probability threats to our future, drawing on the collective intelligence of professional communities in business, government and civil society.
- > Improve collaboration between business, government, and civil society for designing and implementing effective strategies of large-scale system change.
- > Support and mobilize mass movements for re-orienting globalization toward a human face.

Although the World Wisdom Council is not a policy research body, it recommends the following **concrete actions** in order to deflect dangerous trends and pave the way toward higher levels of sustainability and peace:

In the area of socioeconomic development:

To implement effective policies to counter corruption, encourage the will to act in the shared interest of all people, of those yet to be born, control lobbying by narrow interest-groups, reduce greed and self-centeredness, lower barriers to freedom of inquiry, and create cost-effective strategies for implementing programs of global education. Reprioritize budgetary expenditures at all levels of society. (Annual military budgets have reached nearly One Trillion USD globally, while the UN’s estimate for states to meet their Millennium Development Goal commitments is 50 Billion USD — 5% of what the world spends on arms. Even these modest development goals, endorsed by every member state of the UN, have not been met to date.)

In the financial system:

To question the logic of an economic system that is forced to grow faster and faster if it is to avoid crashing, and to question as well the institutionalization of usury as a driving force in the production of goods and services. The current market-based system of „fiat currencies“ needs to be replaced with a phased transition to a global system of currencies whose value is related to real growth in human welfare and not merely economic growth as presently defined.

In politics:

To create political systems where decisions are based on culture rather than purely on economic considerations. A culture-based political system situates human welfare and environmental well-being at the core of the developmental process; deals with all sectors and all interest groups equally and objectively, including business corporations and financial and commercial elites; positions economic and material interests in the broader context of human well-being; focuses attention on key cultural relationships such as the relationship between economics and ethics and between the material and the spiritual dimensions of life; lends more attention to the “trade-off effects” of different courses of political action; and respects the integrity of cultures and recognizes the importance of positioning one’s own culture in the global system of cultures.

As regards education:

To come up with the USD 7 billion a year over 10 years that, according to UNICEF, is required to educate the world’s population, helping to create courses in planetary values and ethics at all levels as an essential aspect of civic education, and identify the most effective educational materials, curricula, and distribution media as well as the most effective institutional structures for accelerating individual, group, and community learning.

In the sphere of the environment:

To stimulate economically viable ecologically sustainable solutions; to abolish environmentally inefficient subsidies; to include environmental costs in the pricing of natural resources and products; to encourage investments in socially responsible businesses; to enable more and more enterprises to adopt the environmental standards ISO 14000 & 14001; to create an international public/private funding mechanism for high-impact technologies such as carbon sequestration or space solar power and for acquiring the rights to innovate “green” technologies such as alternative energy sources; to declare key habitats off-limits for human development and clean air, water, and land a human right.

In the area of population growth:

To achieve a stable world population where fertility and mortality rates are balanced at a low level of population input and output. (In the developing world, where 98% of population growth will occur, positive action in this regard includes increased income, improved literacy, economic empowerment and education of women, urbanization, nutrition and health programs, and improved and inexpensive contraceptives and family planning.)

Concerning science and technology:

To progress toward the development and use of sustainable technologies that harmonize human activity with nature by emulating natural systems and thereby minimizing human impact on the Earth and on other life-forms. To conduct international scientific assessments of new technologies and develop whatever is found feasible and desirable on the 'fast-track' so as to address the principal global challenges. To put on hold the technologies determined to be too risky for humanity to develop at present, and foster collaboration in the research and development of new technologies implementable by all countries and populations.

Messages from the Honorary Chairpersons - Mikhail Gorbachev

To the Participants of the Meeting of the World Wisdom Council
Mr. Etele Baráth, Minister, Council of Ministers
Professor Ervin Laszlo, President,
Esteemed Friends,

In my opinion your initiative reflects the requirements of our day and expresses the totality of the measures sought these days for finding proper methods for warding off the fatal crisis that menaces our civilization on earth.

As the Club of Budapest correctly notes, humankind has long ago turned into a giant capable of solving any task of vital importance. Nevertheless, the tremendous potentials of humankind are not only left unexplored but are used in many cases to its own detriment. The human being is turning into his own enemy. A vicious circle develops, from which nothing but the mind, the human mind, can find the way out.

Naturally there are objective processes that create conditions that are a threat and a danger for our species. We can, of course, manage to live with them at the price of greater or smaller difficulties. Ultimately, however, the greatest challenge facing the world is the result of the excessive, irrational action of the human being, or – the other way around – of his lack of action.

We often speak of human rights and justly so. However, we frequently dissociate these rights from responsibilities. On the other hand, human rights cannot be ensured if we disregard the human being's responsibility for his own behaviour, for his own activities, and for his disregard of ethics and his own fate.

I am convinced that the World Wisdom Council - in helping us find answers to the challenges of life and the solution of concrete problems – will be able to focus attention on the fate of humankind and on its creative role: the role of the saviour and not the destroyer of civilization; the role of the creator of a better, more just way of life.

Much success to the Council and to all its Members and Leaders — and a good way forward!

Mikhail Gorbachev
Former President of USSR, Nobel Peace Laureate

Messages from the Honorary Chairpersons - Robert Muller

Dear Members of the World Wisdom Council
Mr. Minister Etele Baráth,
President Ervin Laszlo,
Honored Guests:

I am deeply touched to be able to express to you the following dream:

The same way as elderly people, like myself, are blessed with the beautiful, meaningful experiences from their lives, the wisdom gained from aging, the elderly nations of today are acquiring a planetwide wisdom for our dear Planet Earth. This gives them the sacred mission and the capacity to achieve an unprecedented, miraculous humanity and Planetary Consciousness where Peace and Love are the cornerstones for all.

I knew a political man, who felt this deeply in his soul: Robert Schuman, from my beloved Alsace-Lorraine. His wisdom and dream created the European Union. It took 43 years to fulfill his dream and he died unfortunately, before he could see it. I went to his tomb to report it to him.

We decided to make him a Saint. In the process we learned something more, for him peace was not the end result: it had to be accompanied by cooperation and above all by love. What a great message this is to the world! His canonization process as the first world political saint is complete and will be announced in 2005. I can imagine how happy he would be to learn of the World Wisdom Council!

May I express the wish that he should be made a World Wisdom Council Saint, that his example should be studied and made public as a contribution to our goals and dreams to make the entire Earth a Paradise of Peace, Cooperation and Love.

My dream is that all 191 nations become the co-builders of PARADISE EARTH with the thinking of the World Wisdom Council. I wish you a great, resounding, historic meeting in Budapest, the capital of the 1108 years old Hungarian state's founding.

Yours devoted to Peace and Love,

Robert Muller
Former UN Assistant Secretary General

The Mandate of the World Wisdom Council

The World Wisdom Council has been convened by the Club of Budapest in cooperation with the World Commission on Global Consciousness and Spirituality in the conviction that the paramount requirement in this age of discontinuity and transformation is to recognize that, through the development of a new dimension of consciousness, the world can be constructively changed by women and men wherever they live and whatever their interests and lot in life.

The task of the Council is to build on the power and creativity innate in all people by:

- > bringing to the attention of the widest layers of the public both the dangers and the opportunities inherent in the human condition in its global dimension;
- > identifying priority areas where individual and cooperative action is needed in order to reinforce progress toward peace and sustainability, locally as well as globally;
- > offering guidance for developing the individual and collective wisdom that empowers action capable of bringing about constructive change in the local and the global economic, social, and ecological environment.

The Council does not claim to have achieved the full development of global wisdom, but rather sees itself as keeper and facilitator of humanity's great traditions of wisdom and understanding. It seeks to cultivate wisdom as the highest priority for our time through various means, including the posing of some fundamental and far from obvious questions that bring into prominence glaring inconsistencies, paradoxes, dysfunctions and pathologies in our individual, institutional, and cultural milieus. It affirms that our mindset, and the way we use the many facets of our mind, shape the reality of the world around us.

The World Wisdom Council is politically, socially, and culturally non-partisan, championing the joint interest of all humans and all life on this planet, informing people so that they can move toward a world where they can live in peace with each other and in harmony with nature.

The Members and Ambassadors of the World Wisdom Council

HONORARY CHAIRMEN

Mikhail Gorbachev (Russia)
Robert Muller (Costa Rica)

MEMBERS

Hafsat Abiola (Nigeria)*
Akbar Ahmad (Pakistan/USA)
Peter Gabriel (England)
Ashok Gangadean (Trinidad/USA)*
Jane Goodall (England)*
Jonathan Granoff (USA)*
Hazel Henderson (USA/England)
Audrey Kitagawa (Hawaii)*
Ervin Laszlo (Italy/USA/Hungary)*
Angaangaq Lyberth (Newfoundland)*
Wangari Maathai (Kenya)
Ekaterina Mojaeva-Kostler (Germany/Siberia)
Lady Fiona Montagu (England)
Bibi Russell (Bangladesh)*
Elisabet Sahtouris (USA)*
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Karan Singh (India)
Wei-ming Tu (China/USA)
Ernst Ullrich v. Weizsaecker (Germany)*
Vadim Zagladin (Russia)

AMBASSADORS

May East (England)*
William Gladstone (USA)*
Tamás Halm (Hungary)*
Jurriaan Kamp (Holland)
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Christoph Quarch (Germany)*
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Wolfgang Riehn (Germany)* coordination
Maria Sagi (Hungary)* event management
Peter Spiegel (Germany)* coordination
Bernadett Szel (Hungary)* logistics
David Woolfson (Canada) documentation

* Participant in the Budapest Meeting

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