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**GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND INFORMATION
FOR THE WORLD SOCIETY'S SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT ¹**

ABSTRACT

The current crisis is an open phase of a global crisis. It is a result of a false recognition of this structural crisis, previously described in the Limits to Growth Report. This crisis is not a result of overpopulation, but of the world society's maladjustment to life in a State of Change and Risk. In this rather new situation, obsolescence (moral destruction) of life-forms not adapted to new life-conditions is the main life-destroying and crisis-generating factor.

To permanently overcome this crisis, we have to reinforce the UN "three pillars" world society sustainable development strategy by including into it the task of building an information basis of sustainable-development policy and economy (including a global early warning system). To achieve sustainable development, what we also need to create includes a subsidiarity-principle-based UN Sustainable Development Council with the World Sustainable Development Strategy Center, including the UN Global Dynamic Monitoring Information Center.

Keywords: feed forward; sustainable development; global crisis; obsolescence/ moral destruction; State of Change and Risk; eco-humanism; social-Darwinism.

After a big financial crisis, world society has recently entered a new kind of crisis. This next, current crisis combines a government/state-debt, unemployment, famine and, as a result, defensive social revolutions (for example: Tunisia, Egypt). At the same time, "economic disparity" and "global governance failures", were treated as basic (root, crisis generating) problems, during the World Economic Forum (WEF, Davos, 2011). ²

¹ It is an upgraded and supplemented text, previously published by the Club of Rome (Michnowski 2010).

² More see: Supplement.

But, at the same time, we hear that—after the big, dangerous shock of the 2008–2009 world financial crisis, with a bail-out therapy (possibly leading to hyperinflation³) supporting large banks—the world economy is already on a path to recovery (G20 Toronto, Seoul 2010). It would mean that the world economy can again deal “as usual”, i.e. without big, structural—also axiological— reforms.

There are in Europe two different proposals for solving this imminent government/state-debt crisis. The first one is to rebuild and sustain economic growth by continuing, for some time yet, growth-stimulating bail-out policies.

This means stimulating a larger government/state-debt—at a great cost to future generations.

The second proposal is to eliminate this debt by means of austerity measures with a view to cutting budget deficits, i.e. cuts in government pensions, wages and social programs.

In both cases the therapy will lead to a new, more dangerous phase of crisis, also coupled with:

- lower level of consumption in Europe,
- increasing destruction to existing science-technology and manufacturing potential;
- lower volumes of Chinese exports to Europe (and *vice versa*),
- higher unemployment rates, and
- more severe social protests.

At the same time we hear of a Chinese axiological crisis-busting proposal: to base our mutual socio-economic relations on a win-win principle (Hu Jinbao 2009, 2011).

But nowadays a very dangerous global socio-economic situation is evidently an effect of the UN's “three pillars” sustainable development strategy weakness.⁴

To avoid the global catastrophe, we have to recognize the essence and real causes of the crises and properly adjust the world society's sustainable development strategy.

For a long time I have been using development cybernetics methods to analyze the core of the global crisis—as recognized by the authors of the “Limits to Growth” Report (Meadows 1972, 1992, 2004ab)—as well as to research conditions of achieving sustainable development, especially the ones related to information bases of sustainable development policy and economy. I am doing this systemic research with the help of my own conceptual model of reality, called *System of Life* (Michnowski 1994, 2006, 2007, 2008).

³ Egon von Greyerz: *Hyperinflation Is Coming And Western Civilization Is About To Collapse*: <http://www.businessinsider.com/egon-von-greyerz-2010-8>

⁴ The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, p. 5: *we assume a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development— economic development, social development and environmental protection—at local, national, regional and global levels* (United Nations 2002).

As a result of my analysis, I propose treating current crises—financial, government/ state-debt, social (mounting unemployment and malnutrition, as well as, defensive riots)—as component parts of the above global crisis. These components are the result of a misguided, egotistic and short-sighted strategy for solving the global crisis. This misguided strategy is based on a false conviction that the main cause of the global crisis is planetary overpopulation, leading to the exhaustion of global resources necessary for humans (Forrester 1971/95, fig. 8, Meadows *Euronatur*, 2009, Optimum Population ..).⁵

A proof of the reality of this global crisis lies in the cumulative and ruthless depreciation—given current patterns of production and consumption—of our life-sustaining natural environment and in the increasing exploitation of natural resources at a pace faster than the rate at which renewable substitutes can be found. Moreover, access to these vanishing resources is fast becoming a *casus belli*.

In the light of my systems research, the whole crisis is not a result of overpopulation, but of the world society's maladjustment to life in a State of Change and Risk (SCR).

State of Change and Risk (SCR) is humanity's relatively new life-state, that has arisen mainly as a result of science-technology progress and the emergence of big-inertia socio-economic structures. The changes in the environment (in a large sense) are pacing so rapidly that the feedback control principle, mainly based upon finding "post factum" that social relations and/or other forms of life are obsolete/morally destructed, does not hold any more. For the sake of life in SCR, we need to add a feedforward control system. It means a necessity to base policies on a pre-emptive development principle. The future is not fully predictable, and therefore such policy will be connected with a high risk of policy failings.⁶

A feedforward control system is based on information about future life-conditions, life-needs, and complex consequences of policies: own ones and those of others. It allows one to predict approaching dangers and eliminate them in an anticipatory way.

Forms of life (life-forms): social relations, axiology (dominant values), economics, technology, diet, medicine, infrastructure, etc.

Conditions of life (life-conditions): state of socio-economic and natural environment, including natural resources accessibility, natural environment quality, intellectual, science-technology and war potential level, etc.

Obsolescence/moral destruction (of life-forms): such a form of life-forms destruction that is caused by means of changes in life-conditions. As a result, a life-form that has not been physically

⁵ (1) *We desperately need for population, energy use, material use, and pollution streams to be reduced* (Meadows *Euronatur*);

(2) *If you want everyone to have the full potential of mobility, adequate food and selfdevelopment, then it is 1 or 2 billion* (Meadows 2009).

⁶ See also: (Toffler 1970).

deconstructed has no ability to support/aid the life of a society in new life-conditions.

In other words, SCR is a qualitatively new situation created mainly by the rapid development of science and technology confronting the ponderous organizational inertia of modern social systems.

In State of Change and Risk (SCR), obsolescence (moral destruction) of life-forms not adapted to new life-conditions is the main life destroying and crisis generating factor.

To eliminate negative effects of the obsolescence (moral destruction), we need more and more wise work for sci-tech progress. But this progress accelerates the rate of environmental change. Therefore, we need more and more ecosocially useful human exploratory and innovative activity. So, instead of putting down economic growth, we have to permanently change production and consumption patterns into eco-socially useful, as well as to enlarge active intellectual potential in working towards common good.

To eliminate, in SCR, the negative obsolescence/moral destruction effects, global governance aided by a feedforward control system, a rise in wisdom⁷ (including common good ethics) and creative activity in particular are essential.

In order to overcome the global crisis, the world society will have to achieve sustainable development—i.e. development without recurrent disasters and the short-sighted construction of new forms of social and economic life on the ruins of former social relations. By “sustainable development” I mean such a form of development which sustainably combines social development with an ecosocially useful economic growth and environmental protection (United Nations 2002).

This will require human coexistence models that are qualitatively different from the present ones. Instead of social-Darwinian global death rivalry, we need informationally efficient (Michnowski 2006, 2009), win-win global cooperation (G20 Toronto. Seul 2010, WEF 2011).

With this cooperation, and a considerable activation of world society's intellectual and manufacturing potential and science-technology development, we ought to properly change patterns of consumption and production, and get access to sources of currently scarce and/or new resources, as well as clean environment.

The emergence of these new social models will be a pre-condition of the transformation of the rapid economic and civilizational growth of big societies—like those in China and India—which until recently were behind in their development into a driving force of world society's sustainable development.

Of prime importance in overcoming the global crisis is the rejection of today's dominating selfishness and individualism in favor of eco-humanism.

Eco-humanism means partnership-based cooperation for the common good/common interest of all people (rich and poor, from countries highly developed and

⁷ More about my cybernetic approach to wisdom, cf.: (Michnowski 2007).

those behind in development), their descendants, and natural environment—commonly supported by science and high technology—as well as information culture.⁸

Partnership-based cooperation along the “development along with the environment (social and/or natural)” principle will require universal access to knowledge about the complex effects of human activity, including those which take place over time and space.

Eco-humanism is a precondition for access to knowledge/information—now usually used in a selfish way—and building with it information bases for sustainable development policy and economy. This will allow the formation of a qualitatively new, sustainable development economy, guided by common good and common interest, in their broadest sense. Such an economy must be founded on a complex balance of profits and losses, embracing its social and environmental aspects; it should also show preference to eco-socially useful creativity.

Eco-humanism is also a condition of effectively addressing various dangers, as well as describing and eliminating them in pre-emptive way.

The eco-humanistic reconstruction of the global economic system will also be necessary for the replacement of today's eco-socially highly costly globalization (Pernicious Globalization) by an eco-humanistic globalization (Inclusive Globalization, fair globalization, globalization with a human face—Merkel 2007) model. Such a new, smart governance and informationally efficient, common-good-oriented form of globalization will be crucial for overcoming the global crisis and creating world society's sustainable development.

Thus, in reshaping the global economic system, eco-humanism will allow world society's strongest players to cease securing access to rare resources (fuel, natural, environmental) through the physical elimination of rivals to these resources. In place of the old, social-Darwinian deprivation of weaker societies of vital resources, access to them will be ensured by the partnership-based cooperation of an adequately educated world society aided by science and information technology.

Building a sustainable development economy with the help of smart global governance will also be crucial for eliminating the defensive terrorism practiced by societies endangered by the present pathological globalization model and for global demographic control.

The above-mentioned proposal is generally opposed in favor of the pathological “zero growth” method for overcoming global crisis also by means of decreasing world population to 1–2 bn (Forrester 1971/95, fig. 8, Merkel 2007, Meadows Euronatur, 2009, Optimum Population).

In light of my systems re- search there are **no limits for Wisdom-based growth and sustainable development of mankind.**⁹

⁸ It is impossible to firmly base politics on a win-win principle without a proper access to knowledge.

In order to overcome—in a developmental manner—consecutive limits to growth, we have to build and incrementally expand— in backcasting (Michnowski 2003, Jablonowski 2009)—the information system (net and GRID) available worldwide—for the sake of sustainable development policies and economy with a view to:

- dynamic monitoring,
- long range forecasting, and
- measurable evaluation of the effects of changes in life-conditions caused by politics, economy, work as well of other, non-man-made, changes in life-conditions of human beings and nature.

Dynamic monitoring (of the set: society-environment life-process) is: collecting data that reflect this process, and a computer simulation (System Dynamics) transforming those (with the help of correlation knowledge) into information about its quality, dynamics, and future, as well as predicted dangers (early warning), provided that no intervention interferes this monitored process.

To properly change globalization and achieve sustainable development, we need to create, *inter alia*, a subsidiarity-principle-based UN Sustainable Development Council (Merkel 2009, Benedict XVI 2009, p. 67, Väyrynen 2010) with the World Sustainable Development Strategy Center, including the UN Global Dynamic Monitoring Information Center (Michnowski 1994b, 2006, 2009).¹⁰

The main task of such global governance are:

- dynamic monitoring and prediction of dangers (Utsumi 2010), and
- design and dissemination of methods of overcoming them.

In the European Union we ought to charge EUROSTAT with dynamic monitoring activity.

Eco-humanism and complex knowledge about the future precondition the developmental crossing of limits to growth, which is the foundation of overcoming the global crisis and achieving the sustainable development of the world's society.

Without creating—with the help of eco-humanistic global governance—information bases of sustainable development policy and economy, it is impossible to base policy and economy on common good/win-win principle, and therefore eliminate speculative capitalism, poverty, unemployment, and excessive growth of the world's human population; neither can Millennium Development Goals be implemented.

It is impossible then to firmly overcome the global crisis.

⁹ Basic conditions developmental crossing of limits to growth, see also; (Michnowski 2008).

¹⁰ Similar reform of the United Nations Organization to overcome a global crisis was also postulated in Poland: (Polska Inicjatywa ..., Momoriał Komitetu Prognoz ... 2003).

More work and less poverty— without the knowledge of the complex effects of socio-economic activity—make us approach a global catastrophe more rapidly by exhausting natural resources and destroying the environment.

To decisively overcome the global crisis, including the European Union state-debt crisis, and avoid a global catastrophe, we need to overthrow—with the help of information culture (Forrester 1971/95, Michnowski 2009)—the social-Darwinian social relations for the sake eco-humanistic ones. It would allow a creation of sustainable-development global governance, based on information about complex effects of socio-economy activity, including those that may arise.

It would allow us also to eliminate dangerous economic disparity.

Without information bases of the creation of sustainable-development policy and economy, it is impossible to achieve the sustainable development of the world society. Without access to knowledge about complex effects of human activity and other environmental changes, proper global governance, economic disparity elimination as well as common good/win-win axiology is not to be realized.

Without access to this knowledge, elimination of the negative effects of a rapidly pacing moral destruction—the main agent of the global crisis—is also impossible.

I suggest that the anti-crisis and UN-reform information conclusions discussed above be included in the EU proposals for UN Earth Summit Rio+20..

SUPPLEMENT

The main anti-crisis conclusions from among those mentioned above were confirmed in some important statements during the World Economic Forum of Davos, 2011, and before it. These are quoted below.¹¹

1. **Global Risks Report 2011:** *Two risks are especially significant given their high degrees of impact and interconnectedness. ECONOMIC DISPARITY AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FAILURES both influence the evolution of many other global risks and inhibit our capacity to respond effectively to them* (Global Risk..., 2011)

2. **Klaus Schwab**, Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum:

2.1. *Warned of "GLOBAL BURNOUT", as the world focuses on reacting to crises as they happen rather than on actively addressing challenges* (World leaders ... 2011).

2.2. *Following a decade characterized by an explosion of global challenges, and most recently a structural economic crisis, we now live in a completely new reality. (...) We can either continue to work as lobbyists for our narrowly defined self-interests and keep doing the same old things that got us*

¹¹ All underlining—LM.

into the crisis in the first place. or we can act together as true global leaders, with the long term global public interest in mind and at heart. (...) here are growing expectations and pressures of the next generation to INTEGRATE EXTERNAL, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS into our national and business development models. (...) We can't keep doing the same old thing in a new era that requires new responses. (...) All these dimensions of the new reality require first and foremost a common approach: basic values and shared norms to be turned into positive forces driving our future. It also requires a new sense of "GLOBAL TOGETHERNESS" (Schwab 2011).

3. Dmitry Medvedev, President of Russia: *(...) we must (...) CREATE A COMMON SYSTEM FOR MONITORING THE ENVIRONMENT and hazardous sites, and a GENERAL WARNING AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. (...) a single natural anomaly or technological error can put entire regions on the brink of ecological disaster (...) many people are talking about the end of the global financial crisis. at the same time it is also clear that things are not that simple (...) the present-day reality in many developed countries is such that they face the problems of sovereign debt, budget deficits and, despite all of that, the reluctance to cut expenditures. (...) this is fraught with new global economic and political crises. (...) today there is an URGENT NEED FOR NEW IDEAS that can change the world for the better, ideas that in the future will set new requirements for policymaking and will become standards for governments, the business community, social development and relations between states. (...) a world where it will be easier and more efficient to work together, to work jointly (...) global partnership and the right way to organize it, no matter how difficult it is to renounce the practice of individual or narrow group interests, it is something that needs to be done. (...) our task is to use every opportunity TO TRANSFORM OUR NEW WORLD INTO A WORLD THAT IS MORE JUST for the vast majority of citizens, a world in which success is determined by talent and hard work rather than FAMILY BACKGROUND (...) we must do everything possible to influence if not the ideology, then the SOCIOECONOMIC ROOTS OF TERRORISM: poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and orphanhood, and to ensure that global development becomes stable, secure and fair. (...) it is a strategic long-term approach to addressing problems (Medvediev 2011).*

4. Micheline Calmy-Rey, President of the Swiss Confederation: *"The gap between rich and poor is growing without relent, (...) GLOBAL JUSTICE IS A PREREQUISITE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT and we have to understand that our lifestyle is not sustainable. The international community should "guarantee that resources are distributed in a way that benefits those who are most vulnerable."*

She called for the creation of a "sustainability council" at the United Nations (World leaders... 2011):

5. **Nicolas Sarkozy**, President of France: *delivered a wide-ranging critique of global banking and vowed to crack down on speculators he blamed for pushing up the price of food and energy. (...) indicated (...) that he favoured a levy on international financial transactions—known as a Tobin tax or “Robin Hood” tax—an idea he intends to put on the G20's agenda. (...) delivered a lengthy critique of international finance, accusing banks of abandoning common sense in derivatives trading. (...) went on to rail against speculators who, he believes are culpable for volatile prices of oil and basic foodstuffs (Sarkozy 2011).*

6. **Angela Merkel**, The Chancellor of Germany:

6.1. (...) *warns against complacency about the risks of a further financial crisis, saying that all the international mechanisms needed to prevent another crash are not yet in place. „Can we safely say that we can prevent further crises from happening? Do we have the necessary mechanisms in place to ensure sustainable growth globally? (...) Although people are quick to blame speculators, speculation “has a root in reality,” (...) This is why we have to do away with the root causes of the speculation. The markets are not yet confident that this high debt will be reduced once growth picks up. That confidence is not yet there (Merkel 2011a).*

6.2. (...) *the international community as a whole must coordinate their economic policy more closely. (...) The world must learn its lesson from the financial crisis and find a path to sustainable growth (...) The international order has failed to keep pace with development (Merkel 2011b).*

6.3. (...) *social market economy is a good model which can show the way forward. (...) the freedom of the individual must be curtailed when it begins to infringe upon the freedom of others. (...) Markets without state regulation cannot (...) fulfill this function. (...) all of these principles (...) must be laid down in (...) a charter for sustainable economic governance. (...) This could take the form of a world economic council at the United Nations, just as we created the UN Security Council after the Second World War (Merkel 2009).*

6.4. (...) *people (...) ask what we are doing to give GLOBALIZATION A HUMAN FACE. (...) ZERO GROWTH CAN AND WILL NOT BE THE ANSWER. Rather, the answer is greater innovation, particularly in environmental technologies. Zero growth would ultimately result in the preservation of the status quo, an absolutely unacceptable idea for emerging economies and developing countries. (...) Growth remains for all countries the basic prerequisite for achieving more employment, higher living standards and greater resource productivity. But growth is not an end in itself. IT MUST BE CREATED EQUITABLY, not through unfair measures (Merkel 2007)*

7. **Benedict XVI**, Pope of Catholic Church: *In the face of the unrelenting growth of global interdependence, there is a strongly felt need, (...) for a reform of the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance (...) to find innovative ways of implementing the principle of the responsibility to protect and of giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making. (...) to arrive at a political, juridical and economic order which*

can increase and give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity. To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis (...) THERE IS URGENT NEED OF A TRUE WORLD POLITICAL AUTHORITY (...) to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good (...) The integral development of peoples and international cooperation require the establishment of a greater degree of international ordering, marked by subsidiarity, for the management of globalization. They also require the construction of a social order that at last conforms to the moral order, to the interconnection between moral and social spheres, and to the link between politics and the economic and civil spheres, as envisaged by the Charter of the United Nations (Benedict XVI 2009).

8. **Paavo Väyrynen**, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development of Finland: *In the Minister's view, there is need to consider whether the G 20 could be altered to obtain a UN "Security Council" for Sustainable Development that would deal with the economic, social and environmental sectors of the UN system (Väyrynen 2010).*

9. THE G20 SEOUL SUMMIT LEADERS' DECLARATION:

1. *working together we can secure a more prosperous future for the citizens of all countries (...)*

4. *to continue our coordinated efforts and act together to generate strong, sustainable and balanced growth (...)*

5. *to put jobs at the heart of the recovery, to provide social protection, decent work (G20 Seoul 2010).*

10. **Hu Jintao**, President of China: *China will pursue the win-win strategy of opening-up and stands ready to work with (...) the international community as a whole to intensify practical cooperation, properly handle various risks and challenges, and make greater contribution to the overall recovery of the world economy (Hu Jintao 2011).*

All above statements show us that an understanding arises in world elite of the inevitability of a big, common good based, civilization transformation for the elimination of world economic disparities. So does a perception of a need for creation mechanisms of smart global governance based on subsidiarity. In order to implement it, an information basis for a sustainable—development policy—and economy-building is the most important task.

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¹² Ex-Member of the Club of Rome.

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