

HIJACKING DEMOCRACY

The Power Shift to the Unelected

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List of Acronyms

ACC	Administrative Committee on Coordination (UN)
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
BWIs	Bretton Woods Institutions (World Bank and International Monetary Fund)
CAMDUN	Campaign for a More Democratic UN
CBI	Consensus Building Institute
CBO	Community-based organization
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN)
CGG	Commission on Global Governance
CIOMS	Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences
CLADEM	Comite de America Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN)
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development (a UN ECOSOC Commission) or Commission on Social Development (a UN ECOSOC Commission)
CSECR	Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (UN)
CHR	Commission on Human Rights (a UN ECOSOC Commission)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women (a UN ECOSOC Commission)
DAW	Division for the Advancement of Women (UN)
DESA	Division on Economic and Social Affairs (UN)
DPI	Department of Public Information (UN)
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women (UN)
G-7	Group of Seven
G-77	Group of Seventy-Seven
GA	General Assembly (UN)
GCWD	Global Coalition World Democracy 2010
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
HABITAT II	Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Istanbul Conference)
HCHR	High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN)
HFA	Health for All (WHO)
HRC	Human Rights Committee (UN)
IAH	Intersectoral Action for Health (WHO)
ICC	International Criminal Court (UN), or International Chamber of Commerce
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development (UN)
IGOs	Intergovernmental Organizations
ILO	International Labor Organization (UN)
IUCN	Commission on Environmental Law of the World Conservation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INFUSA	International Network for a Second UN Assembly
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
MAI	Multilateral Agreement on Investment
MPAN	Millennium People's Assembly Network
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCSD	National Councils on Sustainable Development
NGLS	UN NGO Liaison Services
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGN	Our Global Neighborhood (Report of the Commission on Global Governance)
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN)
PGA	People's Global Action Against Free Trade and the WTO

PHC	Primary Health Care (WHO)
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee (UN)
SC	UN Security Council
SG	Secretary General
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases
TMB	Treaty Monitoring Bodies (UN)
TRIPS	Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UN	United Nations
UNA	UN association
UNCED	UN Conference on the Environment and Development
UNCHS	UN Center for Human Settlements
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	UN Development Program
UNEP	UN Environment Program
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	UN Fund for Population Activities
UNGASS	UN General Assembly Special Session
UNHCHR	UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNIFEM	UN Development Fund for Women
UNSC	UN Staff College
UNU	UN University
WACLAC	World Association of Cities and Local Authorities
WB	World Bank
WBCSD	World Business Council on Sustainable Development
WCED	UN World Commission on Environment and Development
WCPN	World Citizen Party Network
WEDO	Women's Environment and Development Organization
WHA	World Health Assembly (WHO)
WHAY	World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond
WHO	World Health Organization
WHOQOL	World Health Organization Quality of Life Instruments
WOCSOC	World Civil Society Conference
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Through its global conferences in the 1990s, the core staff and worldwide supporters of the United Nations have combined various concerns about human security around the world into the makings of a new paradigm for global affairs. These concerns are vying to inherit the center stage of international security once held by the Cold War, and they have made considerable progress in so doing. These conferences claim to represent an intergovernmental consensus on what is referred to as “sustainable development,” and, as we will see, on the many substantive and diverse political, social, and ethical implications of sustainable development. This supposed consensus has become both wider and firmer in recent years largely in response to the exigencies of economic globalization. But it has also taken a particular ideological shape, and this shape ought to concern us. We need to distinguish the benign motives of many in this global project from the more questionable agendas of some.

Springing from these UN conferences, a dynamic “progressive” movement—a *forward movement* of “partners in global governance”—is carrying ever more followers through the early days of the new millennium. The partners claim that the major issues at stake in the world today are global in nature and require not only transnational approaches but new and stronger institutions with global normative and enforcing power to deal with them. This is what they mean by “global governance.” Mechanisms for global governance, specifically designed to shape and to implement the new consensus, are creating a new standard of global norms. These mechanisms, such as the direct partnership of the United Nations with powerful non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other international civil society actors, often circumvent traditional democratic and diplomatic channels. Nevertheless, they are increasingly influential both within countries and among them. They constitute what we might call a global parallel society.

According to their advocates, global governance and global consensus are inseparable and interdependent: the former functions as the political *process* and the constituency supporting and forwarding the global agenda, the latter as the global political agenda itself (the *content*). The theoreticians of the new paradigm thus see content and process as a dialectic, by which they mean that the political revolution they advocate must be advanced by a cultural revolution, and vice versa. Taken together, these elemental propositions make up the core ideological agenda of the new global governance movement.

The movement for global governance is—to borrow an expression that UN secretary-general Kofi Annan has used—a “quiet revolution” already well underway. Its norms and standards are neither marginal nor reversible: they already affect us all. Even as this movement gathers momentum, its course has been set and its concepts have matured. Scholarship of a high intellectual caliber supports the movement. That scholarship, in turn, has energized recent reforms and current attempts to strengthen the UN, which are identified clearly with the values and principles of the global governance movement. The new consensus has conferred a new mandate on the UN and enhanced its morale. It has also given the UN important and newly

powerful allies. At the expense of traditional democratic institutions, a host of nongovernmental organizations—such as the Women’s Environment and Development Organization, the Earth Council, Greenpeace, and the International Planned Parenthood Federation—have appropriated quasi-legislative and judicial powers in the service of this UN global governance movement. Both the UN and various NGOs are pressuring legislatures worldwide to adapt to their new norms. The language and values of the new consensus have penetrated school curricula worldwide. UN Monitoring authorities (Treaty Monitoring Bodies) are interpreting treaties in a new light. Global-to-local mechanisms, exemplified by the UN’s operational partnership with local authorities, or strengthened regional UN structures (such as the UN Development Program’s “resident coordinator system”) ensure the local implementation of the new consensus. The new standard of “participatory democracy” has begun to structure a global civil society. The institutionalization of global governance is proceeding apace.

This book offers educators and political and business leaders a synthesis of this “quiet revolution.” It details the conceptual framework of global governance and explains its process and contents. The argument highlights the systemic nature of the strategy behind global governance and stresses the importance of addressing it as a whole. The new standard has been constructed as a new social contract with fully global partners—so, anyway, is its ambition. This new contract is designed to pervade all aspects of life in what is presumed to be a new global community. It has the most far-reaching political, legal, economic, social, and ethical implications.

The appeal of the new paradigm is undeniable. It seems common sense to devise transnational solutions for problems that transcend the abilities of individual states, no matter how powerful, to cope with them. It seems benign to put human development and rights above all else. It strikes most people as logical that political change has to be accompanied by new ways of understanding and perceiving the world—that is to say, with a new culture. But if we look a little deeper, we soon see another side to the “quiet revolution.” The new model defies traditional values, deprecates national sovereignty, the market economy, and representative democracy. It demands radical changes in individual and social behavior, as well. The new standard denounces as immoral the principles of modern industrial civilization, individualism, profit, and competition. It also enshrines a highly ideologized conception of multiculturalism, one that denies the universality of mankind embedded in the Judeo-Christian synthesis of ideas, values, and institutions. At stake are a new definition of man’s relationship to nature; the meaning of human fulfillment; the identity of religions, cultures, and nations; the relationship between the individual and the community; and the very definitions of global development, security, and peace.

It is, perhaps, not too much to say that the new ideological leadership of the global governance movement represents a concatenation of old notions in new, “globalized” form. The utopian projects of the modern age have ended in ruin, but the global governance movement carries strong tones of utopianism. The kindred socialist project, too, collapsed because it failed to recognize the perduring qualities of human nature, and tried to change that nature through social engineering. In its “cultural” claims and ambitions, the global governance movement, too, seeks to alter human nature in the service of a share-the-wealth ideological vision.

And since most people in most places do not want groups of bureaucrats, ideologues, and generic activists to tell them what is in their own best interest, this global movement—like its national precursors—must be at heart anti-democratic, or it cannot progress. It seems to be true, alas, that bad ideas never really die; they just take new forms.

To take a new form, old ideas need new vocabulary. The global governance movement has excelled at this process. With subtle shifts of syllables, it is creating new interconnected premises from old ones whose implications are quite dramatic. Thus we are moved from government to global governance, the former implying an institution that derives from society, the latter an institution that orders society from above. We are moved from traditional organizational structures to structures of “participation,” “empowerment,” and “people-centeredness.” Relatedly, we are moved from majority vote to consensus, and from representative democracy to participatory democracy. We are moved from development defined as some form of material economic growth to “sustainable development,” which, as we will see, means something very different. We are moved from an ideal of equal sovereign states to equal global governance “partners,” and from profit to “global values” and a new global “ethic.”

In essence, what this new vocabulary suggests is that we are to move from top down to bottom up, from quantity to “quality,” from the pursuit of happiness to the pursuit of quality of life and well-being. What it really means is that we are to move from systems of representative democracy to systems of shrouded demagoguery, from the struggle of real human conflicts and choices to the artificially ordered world of rule by a global intellectual oligarchy.

Not everything, however, is black and white. In the new scheme of global governing, a genuine intergovernmental consensus is supposed to advance the agendas of self-determining non-governmental organizations that presently structure the “global civil society.” This vision has its positive components: a holistic view of the planet, a more conscious integration of human concerns and resources in policymaking, a healthy recognition of cultural pluralism, a call for more participation, and a sensible inclination toward decentralization and subsidiarity. But a neo-Leftist radicalism mars the new model of governing and the otherwise attractive values that it advocates. A Global New Left has hijacked the global governance movement and has sought to impose its interpretation of new concepts. Its notion of a cultural revolution is just as imperious, elitist, and intellectually authoritarian as those of its predecessors. With an age of biotechnology ahead of us, a time may soon come when the primitive social technologies of the gulag, agitprop, and selected mass murder will give way to truly scientific methods of altering human nature. Heaven help us if the Global New Left has by then seized any palpable political power over large numbers of human beings.

We may no longer sit on fences. We must take a stand and commit ourselves. The political process of enhanced global cooperation must be rescued from this doomed utopianesque crusade of ideological constructivism and returned to realism. The radical components of the global consensus must be clearly identified and separated out from the projects to achieve truly positive social and political change. Such projects must not be owned by radicals and must not become dependent on UN programs and values alone.

They must instead be the products of natural international relationships, genuine creativity, and independent—not elite-dictated—human aspirations.

The challenges we face also demand active commitment from the national leaderships of democratic countries. America, in particular, must provide that leadership at such a crucial time of change. Choices about the future must be made democratically, through real democratic processes, not fake and contrived ones. The commitment needed differs from the faux partnership demanded by the Global New Left for the implementation of their particular values and programs: the democratic obligation of responsible citizens is not to conform, but to discern. This distinction is particularly relevant to the role of business. The market—which the new system would set apart from civil society, even though it is the main engine of badly needed economic development—cannot allow itself to be co-opted in an ill-defined partnership with UN governance.

The normal approach of social science is to go from cases to theory and sociological conclusions. In the global governance process, however, norm-setting and doctrine preceded operationalization and facts. This book follows that pattern and focuses on normative developments and the conceptual framework of the UN system. What public opinion most misunderstands is that the conceptual framework of global governance has been imposed from the outside and is not the result of experience. The first chapter, “The Civil Society Movement,” tells the history of the “quiet revolution” and identifies the mechanisms that led to the creation of new governance models. It focuses on the role of certain prominent nongovernmental organizations. Subsequent chapters define the new “consensus” and address the conceptual framework of global governance. Sustainability, people-centeredness, and holism are the three binding features of the new model. The new concepts that emerged in the 1990s—the “rights” approach, the “equity principle,” reproductive health and rights, the gender perspective, “governance,” the partnership principle, the culture of peace, the global ethic—are all supposedly people-centered, sustainable, and holistic. Human rights, health care, and education are the three domains in which the new paradigm has wrought the most substantive and measurable changes in national policy, and in both national and international law. The narrative illustrates the incremental expansion of the original intergovernmental consensus, a process that generated new rights, new values, new health and education policies, new societal norms, a new culture, and a new global ethic. As it proceeds, it shows how a range of genuinely noble aspirations have been hijacked and distorted by the Global New Left. It shows how the Global New Left, though posing as an entirely new and progressive movement, is in fact a rear-guard assault on the structure of the market-based democratic peace that is emerging from the cauldron of the Cold War. That democratic peace, properly managed, is the global future that promises to be genuinely democratic, pluralist, and prosperous. Future generations will not forgive us if we let the chance be taken from us.

The Civil Society Movement

In his first annual report on the United Nations in 1997, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, described “the contours of the new era” and identified the post–Cold War and post-colonial period as “an era of realignment” (Annan 1997b). Ours is indeed a time of opportunity and a time of contradiction: “As is true of all transitional periods,” he added, “very different expressions of the human predicament coexist in uneasy tension.” There is, moreover, the advent of economic globalization on the one hand but social and political fragmentation on the other:

The assertion of differences are on the rise; zones of peace expand while outbursts of horrific violence intensify; unprecedented wealth is being created but large pockets of poverty remain endemic; the will of the people and their integral rights are both celebrated and violated; science and technology enhance human life at the same time as their byproducts threaten planetary life-support systems (Annan 1997b).

As Annan and many of his friends and supporters see it, an era of realignment is necessary in order to sort out all these contradictions for the general benefit of mankind. But what exactly does this mean? This chapter focuses on the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the realignment process and in what is known as the civil society movement. It starts by tracing the history of the NGO partnership with the United Nations. Subsequent chapters analyze the new conceptual framework of world politics that has arisen from the UN-NGO partnership, and detail the domains in which this new framework is making a real difference on the ground.

Nongovernmental organizations, the UN’s primary partners in shaping the new global consensus, can be defined as the self-appointed advocacy, special interest, and service groups of an inchoate global civil society. They are exceedingly diversified.

Many national and local NGOs, such as the American Red Cross and InterAction, operate on the “supply side,” which is to say that they concentrate on the delivery of various social and emergency humanitarian services. Others, including the European Women’s Lobby and the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, operate on the “demand side” by participating in the formulation of policy agendas, research advocacy, awareness-raising, and global networking. International NGOs—for example, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Amnesty International, Green Cross International, and Parliamentarians for Global Action—concentrate on global policymaking and on monitoring the implementation of programs. Groups in all categories participate in an upstream-downstream movement that

connects international organizations with an emerging global civil society for the implementation of a common global agenda.

International NGOs have supported the UN since the drafting of its Charter in San Francisco in 1945. From the start the UN has embodied the ideals that many such groups had long pursued: peace, development, justice, and human rights. Over the next half-century, this community moved on from generally undefined ideological viewpoints—most being vaguely liberal in inspiration—to develop substantive content and effective policymaking strategies. From an initial group of about 50 NGOs, more than 3,000 such bodies now hold UN accreditation.

First seen as advocates of certain attitudes, views, and policies at the UN, NGOs are today officially recognized by Secretary-General Annan as “indispensable partners, not only in development and relief operations, but also in public information and advocacy,” and even as “implementing partners” (Annan 1998c). For example, in discussing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the secretary-general declared that NGOs “were every bit its authors as the delegates who cast the final votes” (Annan 1998f).

Compared with other organizations, said Annan, the NGOs have an advantage based on “local accountability, independent assessment of issues and problems, expertise and advise, important constituencies, provision and dissemination of information” (Annan 1998c). They are also credited with a role in agenda setting and early warning—that is, awareness of problems before any governmental institution sees them. Over the past decade, such groups have assumed the role of global policymakers and “partners” with alacrity. They often accuse national governments of ignoring issues of increasing global concern: environmental protection, population growth, social equity, economic justice and gender equality, cultural values, and human rights. Although many governments have often treated such issues as marginal, the new intergovernmental UN-NGO consensus has made them central in a shift that insists on the need for new mechanisms of global governance.

This insistence is getting a wide hearing. Western NGOs see the end of the Cold War as having created a vacuum and an opportunity. In an upstream partnership with the UN Secretariat, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and other UN agencies, funds, and programs, NGOs have formulated what they characterize as an ethical, social, and environmental response to the evils of economic globalization. As they see it, NGOs are filling the vacuum while others have failed to act—or have joined the enemy. At global conferences in the post-Cold War era, that response became the object of an alleged intergovernmental consensus: governments “joined the consensus” even if they issued reservations and even if their delegations were not always representative of the views of national citizens. In the main, governments thereby provided NGOs with the opportunity to assume leadership for the globalization of social norms.

These UN-NGO partnerships are at the core of the global governance movement—that is, the governance process spearheaded by the UN’s NGO partners to address the global issues they themselves have raised. If this sounds like a form of political circularity, that’s because it is. Global governance challenges the Western democratic process in fundamental, yet subtle ways. A quiet shift from traditional representative democracy to participatory democracy is in process. Participatory democracy comes about through a growing perception of NGOs as representative of civil society at the international level, and through their expanding

and more formalized role at international meetings, often as part of official government delegations. The partnership principle, which stipulates that the global agenda cannot be conceived or implemented by governments alone, is becoming an accepted norm. Participatory democracy rests on a redefinition of roles and a redistribution of power between governments, civil society, the private sector (which refers mainly to the market and which most NGOs exclude from the civil society category), and international organizations. The point of all this, in the end, is to transfer decisionmaking authority over increasingly significant public policy issues from the elected representatives of nations to a self-appointed and unaccountable group of bureaucrats, activists, and NGO entrepreneurs.

From Stockholm 1972 to Stockholm 1991

Article 71 of the UN Charter—which deals with NGO participation, in a consultative capacity, in ECOSOC work—provides the formal basis for the interactive relationship between the UN and NGOs. But the article does not mention the participation of NGOs in activities of the Security Council and the General Assembly. This matters because NGOs are now working to gain access to the Security Council and to the General Assembly. Article 71, they argue, reveals the will of the founders of the UN to make the “peoples of the United Nations” participants in the efforts of the organization to solve “international economic, social, intellectual or humanitarian problems” (article 1): the participation of NGOs in policymaking, they contend, is in the spirit of the charter. How have we come to this point of debate?

In the early decades of the United Nations, ECOSOC developed arrangements for consultation with NGOs. These arrangements originally concerned only international NGOs. These arrangements were reviewed in ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, through which NGOs of several sorts became eligible for consultative status. General-status NGOs can place items on ECOSOC’s agenda; general- and special-status NGOs can send a representative to ECOSOC public meetings. NGOs on the UN roster can send representatives to meetings concerned with matters within their area of competence. Most UN agencies, funds, and programs have given a similar consultative status to NGOs in their fields.

Soon after the founding of the UN, NGOs began to participate in meetings of the ECOSOC and its specialized commissions (now in charge of the five-year intergovernmental reviews of global conferences). But in the 1970s many national NGOs without official consultative status started participating in parallel or unofficial UN events in the hope of obtaining at the international level the recognition often denied them at home. From the start the issues pushed by international and national NGOs alike were global in nature. The informal, parallel relations that developed between them were to become more important for the future of the civil society movement as a whole than the UN’s formal processes.

Subsequently, an even broader informal movement affecting the whole UN system and involving other actors in the civil society came into existence. The movement was eventually named *the civil society movement*. Secretary-General Annan has redefined *civil society* as “the sphere in which social movements organize themselves around objectives, constituencies and thematic interests” (Annan 1998c). A 1997 document issued by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) sees civil society as “the part of society that

connects individuals with the public realm and the state—it is the political face of society” (UNDP 1997, 6). The secretary-general includes local authorities, mass media, business and industry leaders, and the research community as part of civil society, but its “clearest manifestation,” according to him, are NGOs, which constitute the majority of CSOs [civil society organizations] (Annan 1998c). The UN definition of *civil society* is global and relates to what Annan calls “the emergence of global citizenship” (Annan 1999i).

Accordingly, civil society boils down to groups that “participate” in global agenda-setting and implementation; that is, politically active groups that are primarily special-interest groups, some with a radical agenda. The redefinition of *civil society* in terms of participation is intrinsically connected to the emergence of “participatory democracy,” of which more just below.

The concept of the “global civil society” emerged in the 1990s from the UN’s global conferences. Louise Fréchette, deputy secretary-general, described NGOs as displaying “model global citizenship” by their efforts to help the UN “define the future” (Fréchette 1998). The civil society movement has become a kind of globalization from below, according to Annan, “a global associational revolution,” a “universal movement towards greater citizen action,” and a “new participatory international system responding to the forces of globalization” (globalization from above) and promoting a new paradigm of international cooperation (globalization from below) (Annan 1998c). Annan hails the “NGO revolution,” the “new global people-power,” as “the best thing that has happened to our Organization in a long time” (Annan 1999i). The new global movement is circular. Citizen action is said to be bottom up: it proceeds *upstream* and influences global policy; it finally returns *downstream* to implement the new consensus it has inspired.

But the local-to-global-to-local process skips the national level and hence national sovereignty. National sovereignty is replaced by some vaguely defined sort of collective individual sovereignty, interpreted generously as “people power.” The upstream movement developed in the 1970s through the growing participation of grass-roots organizations advocating their interests at this global level. This amounted to putting pressure on national governments and securing their cooperation by stealth without going through the process of democratic consent. The downstream flow characterizes the present situation: global norms are being implemented locally. The intergovernmental consensus legitimizes the downstream movement to the point that many governments, whatever they may think about this consensus, feel powerless or lack the courage to take exception. Some governments are downright feckless about the whole process: they hide behind the international rhetoric of the intergovernmental consensus while they indulge their own decidedly kleptocratic and basically undemocratic ways.

The momentum of the civil society movement began with global conferences, most notably the first UN conference on the environment, held in Stockholm in 1972. In Stockholm many environmental NGOs participated in parallel events; under their impetus the environmental movement took off internationally. The inclusion of NGOs without consultative status initiated their informal relationship with the UN system. Stockholm broke other new ground, as well, for the environment is not included in the UN Charter as part of the organization’s mandate. Nevertheless, shortly after the conference, a UN Environment Program (UNEP) was created.

The women's conferences in the 1970s and 1980s also played a key role in enhancing the civil society movement. The 1975 Mexico conference fueled the women's movement, pushed forward by NGOs and intensified during the Women's Decade (1976–1985). In contrast to the environmental movement, the women's movement claims to bring the UN back to the spirit of its charter, for the preamble affirms its faith “in the equal rights of men and women.”

At subsequent conferences, parallel NGO meetings became customary. In the 1990s, these meetings turned into organized forums. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, following the suggestions of the UN secretary-general, the participatory process culminated in a millennium NGO forum, which may become a basis for a regular or even a permanent civil society forum.

National NGOs attended the UN conferences not only to advocate their interests but, equally important, to link up with other NGOs and, through growing international networks, to strengthen their position both at home and at the international level. The networks became a global movement. Through such networks, isolated individuals, groups, and NGOs gradually found themselves part of a global civil society that by the 1990s had become powerful enough to exert decisive pressure on the UN's intergovernmental process. This can be seen most vividly in the erosion of the Article 71 model.

The momentum gained by the informal civil society movement progressively distorted the model of relationships between the UN and NGOs articulated in Article 71. Informal relationships became increasingly frequent. Secretary-General Annan remarked that in the present state of affairs “formal relations are rarely a prerequisite for cooperation” (Annan 1998c). Undefined, flexible, and “egalitarian” forms of partnerships between NGOs, governments, and the UN have seemingly become valued over the hierarchical relations implied by formal consultative status. The UN concept of the *sovereign equality of all its members* seems now to apply informally to all partners: governments, the disparate organizational elements of global civil society, business, and formally constituted international organizations. NGOs have become more than mere consultants: they have grown into full-fledged partners in global policymaking—a revolutionary development that has consequently made the UN, governments, and business accountable in effect to NGOs.

Although informal processes have been officially encouraged only recently, the UN system had created informal structures encouraging such developments in the mid-1970s, particularly the offices of the NGO Liaison Service (NGLS) in Geneva and New York. NGLS is an interagency body designed to strengthen cooperation between the UN system and NGOs. NGLS also deals with any non-state actor in international civil society.

The NGLS is not bound by any agency line or any accreditation rule. It describes itself as a demand-driven organization, responding to the needs of the UN system and those of NGOs. It brings them together on issues that concern both. It facilitates the advocacy work of NGOs and itself advocates for them. In the UN and among NGOs, NGLS propounds the value of UN-NGO cooperation. The office provides training and advice on strategy for NGOs. The office insists that an NGO involved in framing the outcome of a global conference has an obligation to follow up at the national level.

North-South political dynamics have also been involved from the start in the UN partnership with

NGOs. At the beginning of the civil society movement, NGOs interacting with the UN primarily came from industrial countries and were international in scope. This is still true; NGOs from the United States overwhelmingly dominate the NGO presence at the UN's New York headquarters. Of the three thousand NGOs with a formal relationship with the UN, only about two hundred come from the South. To correct this imbalance, governments agreed at the 1998 session of the General Assembly to find financing for the participation of NGOs from developing countries.

But the "South" is now split: some countries have emerged from underdevelopment, while others have not. Some "Southern" governments, therefore, still view such participation as another aspect of the North's conditionality of Southern participation in the UN, and they resent such efforts at control. Conversely, Southern NGOs and governments, though in conflict at home, become allies at the UN because they face a common threat: control by the North. In addition, tensions persist between Northern and Southern NGOs. Southern NGOs believe that they know better what is good for developing countries.

From the start, NGOs saw themselves as more representative of people than of governments. Most governments took UN conferences lightly and considered the supposed intergovernmental consensus of mere marginal interest to national policy-making. During the Cold War, too, the Security Council overshadowed ECOSOC and other UN agencies, funds, and programs, so this was not a curious attitude to take.

But things changed at the beginning of the 1990s when socioeconomic issues came to the fore. Most governments at first underestimated the potential role and influence that the UN and its agencies could have in socioeconomic policymaking. They also underestimated the nature and importance of the relationship between NGOs and the UN. The priorities and behavior of governments at home and at global conferences often differed. Governments used to select experts as delegates. In the 1990s, national delegations increasingly included NGOs. The national position assumed at the conferences was never the subject of open national democratic debate, however. As a result, national governments were generally undercommitted to the UN-NGO-led "intergovernmental" consensus, but felt morally obligated to implement it given the rising status of global governance, of which they now willy-nilly found themselves a part. The consensus thus belonged to civil society and to the NGOs representing it. Borrowing from their own semantics, then, they "owned" it. The key commitments of the conferences and their platforms for action represented the *raison d'être* and the mandate of the NGOs. NGOs demanded inclusion of their priorities in intergovernmental documents. Militant ecofeminist and family planning groups routinely behaved at international conferences as if they were staging a civil society coup d'état on the conference floor. Former congresswoman Bella Abzug, then head of the Women and Environment Development Organization, stated for example that there could be "no change" in society "until women occupy 50 percent of the places where decisions are made" (Abzug 1995).

To remedy the persistent problem of national undercommitment, and to make consensus enforceable, *global governance mechanisms* were set in place. These mechanisms, however, are what have facilitated the hijacking of the new governance agenda by the Global New Left.

Many so-called gains from global conferences remain the object of controversy: reproductive health and rights, gender mainstreaming, "family under all its forms," the reduction of parental rights, the

reinterpretation of rights in an individualistic-collectivist light, the equality of all forms of life, a “sustainable and equitable economic order” (with its Leftist implications), UN partnership with NGOs, and so on. But inserting these agenda items in intergovernmental consensus documents was seen as a victory after battles with some governments and opposing forces. An excellent case history is that of the Women’s Caucus and the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

In a 1995 interview Bella Abzug (adviser to Maurice Strong, secretary-general of the 1972 Stockholm conference on the environment and the 1992 Rio conference; and U.S. delegate to the 1994 Cairo conference on population) explained the methods used to achieve such gains. Her explanation helps us understand the revolutionary spirit and strategy of several powerful NGOs in the global governance process.

“We build big constituencies that have a political drive and that will be able to exert pressure, even on those countries that have traditional, cultural and social conditions which move in the opposite direction in giving women equality,” she said. With large constituencies “there is a greater militancy, a greater demand, a greater determination to have things change so that societies function for people and not for institutions alone.” Abzug thus conceived the idea of the Women’s Caucus at the 1992 Rio Conference. In 1991 in Miami she had presided over the World Women’s Congress for a Healthy Planet, which drew 1,500 women from eighty-three countries who approved the Women’s Action Agenda 21.

We had a consensus; our definition of the environment is very broad: it is not earth, it is also human rights, equal rights, peace, economic justice. When we had this agenda, we decided: what are we going to do with it? We have to get the UN conferences, the governments and delegates to include our provisions. So we began to form a Women’s Caucus, which has been present every day at the PrepComs [preparatory committees] and at the international conferences. It has grown and grown. And the Women’s Caucus has produced responsive documents: when they [the conferences] produce their document, we produce our document with amendments and changes. We then go to the countries and to the UN Secretariat and say: “we want these provisions,” and many of them accepted many of our provisions. Once you come here, you become a big force; they can’t ignore you: you are there! The partnership is in the document because we [the Environment Caucus, the Development Caucus, the Health Caucus, and so forth], the caucuses, demanded it. There are lots of caucuses, but none of them is as large and as highly organized or as influential as the Women’s Caucus. We have demanded this partnership. We have demanded the right to speak at the plenary sessions. We have demanded access. We have demanded that we who are experts in many of the things they are talking about should be considered as partners (Abzug 1995).

And indeed they got what they demanded. The question of representation, though, was never properly addressed—not by NGOs themselves or by the UN or by governments. The representativeness of the Women’s Caucus was taken for granted. The group’s control was so paramount that a virtual monopoly ensued, with no political space for any opposition.

The success of the hijacking undertaken by the Women's Caucus was partly due to Abzug's charismatic and forceful personality. But other forms of a coup d'état, less visible but equally powerful, also took place. For instance, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), along with a few other population control organizations, hijacked the Cairo document at its source; that is, when it was being drafted. The groups have a long and firmly established partnership with the UN, particularly with the Secretariat, the UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Considered to be genuine experts on population, they shaped the document behind closed doors and thereby prevented other viewpoints from being presented to UN member-states.

IPPF is the largest and most influential world federation of family planning associations, with headquarters in London. In the area of population, IPPF influence on WHO and UNFPA far outweighs that of governments. But the controversial nature of the group's positions renders its odd form of monopoly partnership with the UN highly questionable.

As NGO networking moved forward and broader coalitions were formed, NGOs developed a conceptual approach to global problems that enlarged their original mandate: *multisectoriality*. Specific concerns or views of single-issue NGOs or partners have been integrated, which is to say that the UN system's approach gradually shifted from a compartmentalized view to a multisectoral one. The vision and leadership of individuals such as Abzug and Gro Harlem Brundtland, director general of WHO and former prime minister of Norway, helped this evolution.

The most visible example of the process of integration is the alliance of environmental NGOs (including NGOs defending the rights of indigenous peoples) with feminist NGOs and population control NGOs. This new triple alliance came to the fore in Rio at the 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED). For several groups, environmental concerns included human rights, economic justice, and reproductive health. There seemed to be a remarkable compatibility of these NGOs' agendas and a practical interest for all parties to form coalitions. They also shared a common affinity with the new vision of an activist UN and the ideological objectives of UN reform. The search for a new social contract had begun, and its name is "sustainable development."

Sustainable development as the new paradigm results directly from the multisectoral approach seen as strategy. In the 1980s emphasis was shifting from environmental protection as a sectoral issue to sustainable development as an integrated or holistic concept. As detailed below, sustainable development is a system of equilibrium with three parameters: environmental protection, social equity (with gender equity as a top priority), and economic growth. The three parameters supposedly cover all components of the new social contract. Global governance is also a system of interactive equilibrium between three partners: global civil society, international organizations, and governments. Some define it as a balance between the market, civil society, and governments, with international organizations in this last category. In both cases, partners are in principle equal or sovereign in rights and influence.

The origin of sustainable development as a paradigm derives from the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), set up in 1983. The commission produced a

momentous report, *Our Common Future*, submitted to the General Assembly in 1987. It contained Brundtland's now classic proclamation on sustainable development: "Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future" (WCED 1987). The statement presents a conceptual shift from development as growth to development as sustainability. Brundtland asserted that "far from requiring the cessation of economic growth," the new paradigm "recognizes that the problems of poverty and underdevelopment cannot be solved unless we have a new era of growth in which developing countries play a larger role and reap large benefits" (SIGSG 1991, 8), according to the principle of equity. The eradication of poverty remains a priority target but it is now seen in its interconnection with environmental degradation and various forms of inequality. Indicators of sustainable development have been devised to monitor the balance of the system. Now environmental resources become "the lifeblood of socio-economic development," and the state of the environment is "a vital aspect of human well-being everywhere" (UNEP 1992, 11). An informal process or movement—that of NGOs and civil society—thus helped produce a formal concept, sustainable development, which in turn formalized the multisectoral approach, created a new global consensus, called for UN reform, and extended partnerships and global governance in every direction. In the meantime the Cold War had ended, and economic globalization moved into full swing.

On April 22, 1991, thirty-six world leaders met, again in Stockholm, to strategize on the future of the planet. Socialists or left-wing leaders dominated. Participants included Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan), Willy Brandt (Germany), Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway), Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil), Ingvar Carlsson (Sweden), Jimmy Carter (US), Bronislaw Geremek (Poland), Vaclav Havel (Czech and Slovak Republic), Stephen Lewis (Canada), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Jan Pronk (Netherlands), Shridath Ramphal (Guyana), Nafis Sadik (Pakistan), and Maurice Strong (Canada). They stated in the preface of the resulting *Common Responsibility in the 1990s* that

. . . the world today has a unique opportunity to meet the global challenges. Securing peace, sustainable development and democracy require nations, in their common interest, to create a new system of global security and governance. We believe that the time is right for nations to take that great step forward, living up to their common responsibility. . . . World leaders must now act determinedly to build a new system for peace and security . . . we need to restore global morality. We need the vision of being one global neighborhood . . . we need a new world order (SIGSG 1991, 5).

In their vision, the common interest of nations has replaced national interests.

Common Responsibility in the 1990s built on *The Limits of Growth* (1972, Club of Rome) and *Our Common Future* (1987), and it anticipated *Our Global Neighbourhood* (1995). Indeed, there is a striking continuum in the conceptual formulation of the new process of global governance. Many of these leaders were already holding, or were soon to hold, key positions at the UN, in the consensus-building process of the global conferences of the 1990s, and in the strengthening of the UN system and of global governance. Brandt (former West German

chancellor and president of the Socialist International) had chaired the Independent Commission on International Development Issues. In January 1990 he invited the members of the commission to Königswinter, Germany, where they met together with individuals who had served on the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (Palme commission); the South commission, chaired by Nyerere; and the Brundtland commission. Participants in this meeting asked Ramphal (then British Commonwealth secretary-general), Carlsson (then prime minister of Sweden), and Pronk (then minister for development cooperation of the Netherlands) to prepare a report on global cooperation in the 1990s.

The Stockholm Initiative followed the production of this report. These participants proposed a commission on global governance to help build a new system of global security. (Such a commission was established in 1992 after recommendations by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali. It was co-chaired by Brandt, Carlsson, and Ramphal.) Also present in Stockholm were Brundtland, Sadik (former executive director of UNFPA and secretary-general of the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development), and Strong (secretary-general of the 1992 Rio conference on the environment and later executive coordinator of UN reform).

The makeup of the leadership illustrates the interconnection with interested NGOs and others. Strong was the secretary-general of the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment and then the first executive director of UNEP in Nairobi. He was then appointed president, chairman, and CEO of Canada's national oil company, Petro-Canada. He was the under-secretary-general of the UN (1985–1996) and a member of the Brundtland Commission. He was the secretary-general of the 1992 Rio conference (the earth summit). He was named senior adviser to the president of the World Bank in 1995. Secretary-General Annan appointed him the executive coordinator of UN reform (1997–1998)—after which Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette, who has headed the steering committee on UN reform, came on board—and he is now an independent adviser to the UN. Strong is also a member of the Earth Council, which serves as the secretariat for the earth charter process. The objective of the Earth Council is to promote “a holistic and integrated approach to operationalizing sustainable development, within a framework of ethics and democracy.” The council also works on “defining a legislative agenda for sustainable development, . . . preparing a legislative framework for national sustainability and promoting implementation of sustainable development through local authorities” (Earth Council 1998).

The Stockholm participants were committed to installing a new world order, one that would emerge through the strengthening of international institutions. The initiative reads: “For a new world order, it is vital that the United Nations is made stronger and more effective” (SIGSG 1991, 12). Annan's reform package logically follows from that statement. UN reform unites the goal of strengthening the UN system with the new global vision provided by the global conferences of the 1990s. People in key positions and the partners were the only ones interested in the premise, and the only ones truly participating in the forward movement. Reforming and invigorating the UN was linked to enforcing sustainable development, development meant not as economic, but human development.

A crucial aspect of the Stockholm agenda concerned the redefinition of global security. Again,

according to the initiative,

We must realize that there is a wider concept of security, which deals also with threats that stem from failures in development, environmental degradation, excessive population growth and movement, and lack of progress towards democracy. Only with such a wider concept of security can we find ways of securing a lasting world peace (SIGSG 1991, 17–18).

In other words, the concept of security became holistic.

More specifically, the definition of security was enlarged by integrating the concerns of sustainable development. Holism is the touchstone of the new paradigm. Not only did the partners hope that sustainable development would claim the attention and priority given to security during the Cold War, but they related sustainability to security: “The consequence of the rise of NGOs as significant policy-influencing actors is to tilt the balance away from hard to soft security” (Thakur and van Ginkel 1999). Symptomatic of the redefinition of security was the appearance of expressions combining security and development, such as *food security*, *health security*, *environmental security*, and *safe motherhood*. The 1999 UNDP *Human Development Report* thus speaks of economic insecurity, job and income insecurity, health insecurity, cultural insecurity, personal insecurity, environmental insecurity, and political and community insecurity.

The 1991 Stockholm participants assumed that governments and partners in global governance accepted the concept of sustainable development. The challenge was now to put it into practice. In the leaders’ view, sustainable development could “only be achieved through a broad participatory process, involving all layers of society, both in public and in the private sectors. Openness, freedom of information and the full right to democratic participation is therefore a precondition for sustainable development” (SIGSG 1991, 27). The Rio conference strongly reiterated the view. The indivisibility of sustainable development and global governance was now explicit. A new democracy (participatory democracy), a new politics (global governance), and a new diplomacy (conference diplomacy) were all in sight. These were deemed to be irreducible necessities of the new global “platform.”

The upcoming global conferences—gathering all global governance partners (governments, the UN, and the global civil society)—were the obvious fora to realize these objectives. The Stockholm participants proposed that “nations resolve to make the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development a breakthrough for achieving sustainable development” (SIGSG 1991, 30) and that the 1994 Cairo Conference on Population and Development “promote the implementation of policies and programs to reach population stabilization goals” (p. 31), an essential element in people-centered sustainable development. Participants also launched the idea of an earth charter, presented as a “code of environmentally sound conduct,” as an “ethical basis for survival”—the “new ethics” and called for a world summit on global governance “similar to the meetings in San Francisco and at Bretton Woods in the 1940s” (p. 41).

The UN’s Commission on Global Governance was charged to report on the strengthening of global cooperation to secure global peace, achieve sustainable development, and universalize democracy in the new

global situation. *Our Global Neighbourhood*, published in 1995, addressed the governance of global society. (The report converts the “good neighbors” of the UN Charter to “new global neighbors.”) Though disbanded after the report, the commission succeeded in creating a school of thought and leaving a legacy of ideas that were integrated in Secretary-General Annan’s ambitious UN reform package. The commission analyzed the forces of global change, suggested the reform of international institutions, and mobilized political will for multilateral action. The unit made recommendations to the UN and its specialized agencies and to the Bretton Woods institutions (namely, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank).

The end of the Cold War had opened new global perspectives, and bequeathed new opportunities for the global governance movement. The civil society movement had played a decisive role in freeing Eastern bloc countries from Soviet control. It had, indeed, won the recognition of civil and political rights advocates worldwide. The world breathed a collective sigh of relief when the danger of nuclear war and the threat of Soviet imperialism faded out, but soon realized that new concerns had arisen. Socio-economic issues came to the fore. The partners in global governance seized leadership in addressing these new global concerns.

The end of political totalitarianism implied a transition to a market economy. The demise of the Soviet system did not imply sympathetic acceptance of the American model and power, however. “All of a sudden,” Raymonde Martineau, a UN NGO liaison officer, said, “you had only one economic regime which exacerbated conflicts and frustrations, and people fell into self-interests out of fear” (Peeters 1998e). Ethnic conflicts escalated. According to Martineau, a *second* transition phase from the end of the Cold War had begun. Order had to be restored; “new, global parameters” had to be created. In other words, American power had to be balanced. The vacuum left by the shift of international power prompted a host of advocacy NGOs to try to fill the vacuum. In fact, there was no vacuum, neither cultural nor political. The existence of a vacuum is a construct of the NGOs, whose pretensions to fill it are utterly self-serving.

The coordinates of the new paradigm of international governance are a long-term “vision” (sustainability); a global, people-centered “perspective” (people-centeredness); and a “reality” in its holistic complexity (holism). These terms have prevailed at the UN. Governments have failed to provide leadership in the post-Cold War context because they held on to their short-term vision and interests. The same criticism is now addressed to business in the era of economic globalization. NGOs, conversely, have a long-term vision; they are people-centered; and they have become global through their networks—so, in any event, are the claims of their executives and supporters. The UN itself was created to implement a long-term and global vision: in other words, then, the UN and NGOs share these essential practical features. Most governments do not, however. Hence, what is ideally touted as an equal governance partnership that includes governments is, in truth, an adversarial relationship in which governments—except especially pliant and supine ones—are the targets. They possess the reins of public policy, with real budgets and real forces. The aim, ultimately, is to get hold of those budgets and forces.

But how to do it? How to get leverage on the traditional powers and prowess of interstate diplomacy? Enter the “conference process.”

The Conference Process and NGOs

The beginning of the 1990s saw a momentous change of outlook. The paradigm of international cooperation was rapidly shifting in most parts of the attentive world from hierarchical institutionalism to people-centeredness, from representative democracy to participatory democracy, from top-down decision making to consensus building, from development for the underdeveloped to global sustainable development, from ideological confrontation to the oneness of humanity, from profit to values, from national sovereignty to global governance, from unresponsive government to civil society “ownership.” Emphasis has also shifted from Cold War perceptions of international security issues (nuclear threat, communism) to global human concerns: the eradication of poverty and the establishment of justice and human rights for all, the ascendance of individual and community initiative, participation and empowerment, gender equity, and human sustainability. “Security” is now all of these things, and these things, of course, can be pursued by actors other than governments.

The new context was aided not only by global peace and the end of the Cold War, but also by nascent globalization. Markets became global. There was cultural and ethical globalization as well, aided by the information revolution and other new technologies. Secretary-General Annan views the phenomenon of the civil society as “arguably one of the happier consequences of what we now recognize as the essence of modern life: globalization” (Annan 1999i).

But the perception of globalization was subject to some degree of ambivalence. Globalization also came to designate a source of many evils, particularly economic globalization, which was taken to be synonymous with global market capitalism. It therefore represented a radical change regarding social and environmental progress—radically worse. Speaking of “globalization with a human face,” Annan praised NGOs that “have already given new life and new meaning to the idea of an international community.” They have been driven to action by “the desire to participate in the management of a changing world and the need to engage in areas where governments are unable or unwilling to act” (Annan 1999i). Globalization is thus not one-dimensional.

The new paradigm revolves around two poles: globalization on the one hand (global change, enactment of global commitments, global governance) and the sovereignty of the individual on the other (free choice, human rights, devolution of governmental power to civil society and local authorities, people-centeredness). But the new standard’s “people-centeredness” is flawed by its radicalism, particularly by the way that the family, religion, business enterprises as forms of human community, and even national cultures are treated. The individual’s uniqueness and identity as a person, the pursuit of happiness, private initiative, marriage, and parental bonding tend to be excluded from the paradigm. Women, youth, the elderly, indigenous people, marginalized groups, and business enterprises are approached as belonging to a class. Radicalism is collectivist: global governance co-opts these groups as partners. Furthermore, internalizing the norms and values of the new consensus seems to go hand in hand with rejecting as reactionary any bond to basic human communities or to any system other than that ordained by the new paradigm. Rights, values, and objectives then become conflictual referents. Children are to be freed from parental control; women are to be

empowered and liberated from reproductive roles. Traditional cultural groups and religions may prove to be obstacles to human development, and if so their autonomy is deemed expendable. Business is asked to internalize what amount to anti-market values.

The global conferences in the 1990s, covering all aspects of international cooperation, took place in a context of the multifaceted globalization process just outlined, and contributed much to generating the new global norms of which we have spoken. The conferences' programs of action were meant to be implemented globally and to cover all phases of postmodern reality. But despite their professed loyalty to democracy, there has been no room for opposition or dissent from the reigning paradigm.

Between 1990 and 1996 the United Nations convened nine major conferences in which the "entire international community" came together to agree on "shared values, on shared goals and on strategies to achieve them," all this "with the strong support of the UN General Assembly, currently the voice of 185 Member States, and the recognition that the end of the cold war presented the opportunity—indeed, the necessity—to revitalize international cooperation on development issues" (UN 1997). The nine conferences were the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990); the World Summit for Children (New York, 1990); the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992); the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993); the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994); the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995); the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995); the Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II, Istanbul, 1996); and the World Food Summit (Rome, 1996). These conferences produced, according to the UN's own estimate, "a global consensus on the priorities for a new development agenda for the 1990s and beyond" (UN 1997).

Rio achieved an overall consensus on sustainable development, equally applicable to the North and the South, the East and the West. Its outcome, Agenda 21, is widely considered to be the most comprehensive program of action approved by the international community. But the very complexity of Agenda 21 has stifled its implementation. *Ecoefficiency* became an economic principle applicable to both governments and enterprises. More important, Rio advocated a global change of attitudes and behaviors regarding consumption and production, laid the groundwork for "responsible human reproduction" with the view of stabilizing world population, and determined that education was the way to transmit the values of the new culture.

Vienna was touted as a breakthrough in human rights. It initiated the "rights approach," or "rights culture," including the right to development and the right of people to a healthy environment. Women's rights and "citizens' rights" (those of vulnerable groups such as children, refugees, handicapped people, and indigenous people) received special emphasis. Vienna also stressed the need to catch up with economic, social, and cultural rights neglected during the Cold War.

Cairo became a "watershed" in development by introducing "reproductive health and rights" for all, an approach that built on Rio and Vienna. It brought about a Copernican turn from top-down population control to "people-centeredness" and "ownership" through awareness-raising campaigns. The agenda remained collectivist: global population stabilization.

Copenhagen formalized the adoption of a "new, people-centered social contract," characterized by the

overriding principle of equity (implying health care for all, education for all, quality of life for all, reproductive health, gender equity, intergovernmental equity, intergenerational equity, and North-South equity). Beijing, with its gender perspective, built on Cairo. Istanbul conceptualized the partnership principle and gave legitimacy to the civil society revolution and the informal NGO movement. Global governance became conceptually more structured and itself the object of a consensus. Rome cemented the whole package by obtaining global consensus on the integrated, indivisible character of all components of the new paradigm and on its priorities. Holism was enshrined.

Although there has been no formal conference on health, health was in no way left out; on the contrary, it was at the top of the new development agenda through concerted efforts led by the World Health Organization. Education appeared increasingly vital to the long-term ownership of sustainable development by younger generations. The overall picture was to be crowned by a universal ethic, a “culture of peace,” and new partnerships with local communities, youth, religion, parliamentarians, the elderly, the education community, and the private sector. The primary gains of each conference relate less to its particular theme than to the advancement of the “forward movement” of global governance. For instance, the advance at the Rome conference was understood to be less agreement on food security than on approaching the problem through the paradigm, which is to say in an integrated, holistic way.

The vast undertaking of global conferences is supposed to show, according to the UN, “one of the United Nations system’s greatest strengths: the ability to move from consciousness-raising to agenda-setting to agreement on action by Member States to follow-up on conference commitments and to effective assistance for the countries that need help in realizing their commitment” (UN 1997). Awareness raising, agenda setting, consensus building, implementation, and monitoring are the five stages of the conference process. They also are a cycle that must be repeated at every level of implementation. The UN programs are enacted in partnership with NGOs and civil society. At every stage of the process, these partnerships remain crucial. Sustainable development essentially cannot be implemented without the vital assistance of civil society. What this sort of language really indicates, however, is that the consensus is not genuinely intergovernmental, but draws its legitimacy from sources other than representative democracy.

The global conferences of the 1990s were perceived by their core participants and supporters as constituting one great cycle. These conferences formed a whole, a continuum. Issues were, in a deliberate way, seen as interdependent. This view itself was a momentous shift according to its participants. Each conference was said to build on the gains of the previous, as it thereby consolidated previous consensus with, in the end, one single integrated consensus. “Coordinated follow-up” has been stressed. Coordination and the proclaimed “interdependence of issues” are strategic concepts in this world of conferences. The stated priorities are to stabilize the world’s population, to change patterns of production and consumption, to enforce the equity principle globally through sociocultural changes, to make men and women “radically equal” socially, to construct a new global ethic, and to move toward a “global democracy.”

The conferences are over, but the process of global change is still unfolding in different and nonetheless prolific ways. Each conference set long-term targets (the Cairo conference, for instance, has a

twenty-year implementation schedule). Every five years the implementation of the goals of each conference is formally reviewed at the intergovernmental level: first at meetings of the specialized commissions of ECOSOC (also called *PrepComs*), then at a special session of the General Assembly (UNGASS). Governmental negotiations are based on a report prepared by the secretary-general. The Secretariat interacts directly with NGOs and with UN specialized agencies, funds, and programs considered experts in their fields. The plus-five reports, as they are called, are also informed by critical informal events over which governments exert no control, such as the closed-door “expert meetings” convened directly by the UN Secretariat. The reports of the secretary-general often reflect the activities and findings of the forward movement more directly than the views of governments.

Indeed, if governments have been undercommitted since the global conferences, civil society and UN bodies have advanced on two fronts: in expertise and services. In the past five years, the partners consolidated their networks, promoted research, and worked on better conceptual frameworks. As a result, the secretary-general’s plus-five reports have differed substantially from the consensus to which governments had adhered. Global consensus and global governance have thus continued to expand without democratic checks. The intergovernmental review process has served the forward movement, not governments. Thus the movement has become better organized with each iteration of review. It gains valuable political and diplomatic experience, and, in the end, managed to come up with a platform that was increasingly shared by all partners.

Further, the conference review process and the UN reform process have merged. The agenda of every conference program of action and, increasingly, policy documents as well, contain a stipulation on strengthening the UN. The consensus has become the new mandate of the UN system as a whole and of each UN body in particular. The mandate is presented, however, as a rediscovery of the original mandate in the Charter, adapted to the circumstances of globalization. Not surprisingly, Secretary-General Annan has proposed in his reform package that the global conferences serve as model for meetings of the General Assembly.

The continuum between the global conferences and UN reform extended into the preparations for the millennium assembly, with its redefining of the goals of the UN in the twenty-first century. The spirit of the new paradigm provided a substantial part of this vision. Mr. Annan has seen the millennium events as strengthening the UN system, enhancing political will to implement the new consensus, and consolidating global governance.

Out of the great cycle of UN conferences came “intergovernmentally agreed language”: namely, the vaunted consensus. At the conferences governments registered reservations, but in the follow-up process these reservations were rarely taken into account. Consensus documents tend, in practice, to be treated as if they had been finalized by a majority vote, although in theory they are presented as a non-binding political consensus. The strange magic of consensual agreements is that they commit parties to enactment without their being binding, and to implementation without their being enforceable. Legitimate misgivings over either the direction or the realism of the consensus are swept aside. The result is a great deal of puffery posing as real political reform. Words have displaced action. Conference discussions have displaced real analysis.

Proclamations have displaced hard work. Developing symmetrical models and promoting new visions have displaced real political action. To the truly poor, displaced, oppressed, and neglected of the world, this could amount in the end to a cruel hoax.

The vaunted consensus has been closed to outsiders of the forward movement, because those outsiders—government, in particular—have real people to govern and to help under real circumstances. But it remains open to the UN’s special partners who continue interpreting the consensus in the light of their own agenda. The partners’ agenda—that is, the hidden agenda of radical groups working against democracy, family, liberty, free market, religion—is the real powerhouse of the process. The process is self-generating as it keeps on enlarging the consensus according to the partners’ vision.

UN member-states have been remarkably absent in monitoring this enlargement process. The original intergovernmental consensus may be identified with its own ever-expanding agenda. Conceived as an umbrella concept, sustainable development has become the prototype of a consensus that is sealed by the alleged commitment of governments and yet somehow peddled as progressive and ever expanding its scope. As the follow-up process has shown, however, radical NGOs cannot always attain their objectives. At Beijing-plus-five, for instance, they did not manage to insert “sexual rights” and “sexual orientation,” and in that respect the review did not go further than the conference itself.

In addition, many key terms or expressions used in the formulation of the new paradigm—such as *sustainable development, reproductive health, the gender perspective, the partnership principle, the rights approach, quality of life, people-centeredness, ownership, holism, global governance*—sound progressive but their meaning has remained nebulous for most governments. This has made it easier for governments to commit to these notions, because of their ambivalence. The new terminology has been invented by the partners and interpreted by different people in different ways, both mainstream and radical, as if it had been agreed in advance to “let a thousand flowers bloom.” This vagueness, however, is of great advantage to the Global New Left. The vocabulary’s high-sounding vagueness attracts people of good will but not much experience, and once attracted they are vulnerable when the radical partners impose their own, top-down interpretation of what these sonorous phrases really mean. It is too bad that George Orwell is no longer among the living, for there is ample material here for a sequel to *Animal Farm*.

Furthermore, the concepts are complex and loaded with implications that are fully perceived only by those who created them—or so it may be conveniently claimed. In typical instances the new terminology is “clarified” only after “consensus” on it was reached. In general, clear definitions have been avoided. Hence, Ingar Brueggemann, director general of IPPF, explains that definitions tend to irritate people. The partners should therefore strategically avoid them and use “descriptions” instead. A definition always depends on how it is interpreted. Interpretation is “something you cannot really enforce, but you can create awareness,” and awareness raising is one of NGOs’ primary tasks. Brueggemann “describes,” for example, the controversial concept of sexual rights: “A person, irrespective of reproductivity, has a right to be guided, cared for, informed, in order to be able to live satisfactorily and healthily with his or her own sexuality.” She includes in sexual rights a woman’s right “to enjoy sex.” For IPPF, ownership relates to “ownership of the body, and

therefore, to a woman's right to choose." *People-centeredness* is another key term of the new consensus that has been hijacked by the Cairo agenda. The former approach focused on "coercive family planning: a very abstract concept." In contrast, the shift at the Cairo conference concentrated on people's needs and on the quality of life. Brueggemann notes that ministers of health have no problems with the new concepts (Peeters 1999a). The Cairo plus-five document boasts that "the Conference's broad-based definition of reproductive health is being accepted by an increasing number of countries." How odd that the key to the Cairo "consensus," reproductive health, would be accepted then but not "understood" until five years later.

The authority of the new paradigm rests heavily on putative NGO expertise. The intergovernmental consensus owes its origin to a small group of experts that are not formally identified in negotiated documents. The experts are specialized institutes, individuals, professionals, and primarily NGO staffs working in partnership with specialized UN bodies. NGO expertise is said to originate from their grass-roots and acquired skills: they "know" people's real-life situations. NGOs are also praised for their ties to groups that institutions find difficult to reach. Governments and bureaucracies tend to be remote and "abstract." Experience, know-how, and especially praxis, a time-honored Marxist term, are described as the basis of NGO authority, expertise, and legitimacy. NGOs have "first hand knowledge and experience of people and conditions on the ground. . . . This advantage, combined with the mission of NGOs to explain things in terms of what they mean for the poor, gives NGOs unparalleled insights into the complex political economy of development" (UN NGLS 1996, 7). The rationale of the UN-NGO partnership is that, to be legitimate and effective, NGO influence and interaction "at the international level" must "be firmly rooted in NGO work and experience at the national level." The partnership implies that NGOs are more representative of people's real concerns than are traditional democratic institutions and processes.

In their relationships with NGOs, national governments have behaved differently at home and at the intergovernmental level. The unprecedented NGO participation at the global conferences of the 1990s took many governments by surprise. Participation ranged from 45 NGOs at the children's summit to 2,400—represented by 8,000 individuals at the Istanbul NGO forum. Other levels of participation were 2,400 representatives of NGOs at the earth summit with more than 17,000 people at the summit's NGO forum; more than 800 NGOs at the human rights conference; 4,200 representatives of more than 1,500 NGOs at the NGO forum in Cairo; 4,500 NGO representatives at the Copenhagen NGO forum; more than 5,000 representatives of 2,100 NGO in the Beijing conference with 30,000 participants at the NGO forum. The groups were present before, during, and after conferences. They were constantly on the offensive, at times reducing governments to a defensive role. After the conferences, as the process moved "from agenda to action," NGOs warned governments, "Civil society is watching you!" NGOs became watchdogs, constantly prodding governments.

In a significant number of countries, the preparations for the conferences had brought governments and NGOs into closer dialogue through national planning committees. National committees helped to break down some barriers between governments and NGOs. At the global conferences, governments became gradually aware of NGOs' expertise on issues; some avowed that if they were to "implement the commitments

they had made,” they needed the help of those NGOs that they had formerly been inclined to sidetrack. The more “progressive” governments openly encouraged the involvement of civil society in national policymaking: the UN “partnership principle” became normative for many national governments.

Yet not all governments welcome NGO partnership in implementing their commitments. Governments that took part in the deliberations to review ECOSOC accreditation rules for NGOs were generally not favorable to NGOs playing a more active role, especially in global conferences. “There are a number of governments,” says Assistant Secretary-General Gillian Sorensen, “including some major ones, who do not wish to encourage NGOs to play a greater role.” Some countries find it “threatening” and say that NGOs “want to exceed their mandate, to act as if they are governments and they are not.” They argue that some NGOs are “antidemocratic” and “self-selected.” And “some authoritarian governments. . . can only see NGOs as the opposition” (Peeters 1999e).

In short, the role of the NGOs is not universally accepted. Governments do not want to surrender their power. Cyril Ritchie, chair of the WOCSOC International Steering Committee, claims, however, that the issue is not giving up power, but “reshaping . . . the power distribution. . . . We need strong governments, because only strong governments can implement the commitments they made” (Peeters 1999g).

NGOs have always known that the objectives of the conferences were not necessarily priorities for all governments. Governments were pushed by public opinion, but after the conferences, Realpolitik takes over. If the public opinion movement that inspired those conferences does not continue, it is certain that there will be a let-down. NGOs fear this and want to avoid it (Peeters 1998e; quoting Martineau).

NGOs therefore plan to continue exerting pressure on governments to implement global conferences and recognize them as legitimate partners in this process. But they will simultaneously insist on maintaining their autonomy and independence from governments, and not wait for government to act.

NGOs will likewise continue to press the UN and governments to gain entry into the work of the General Assembly and the Security Council. NGO participation during the regular session of the General Assembly has been the object of debate at the UN for the last several years. The groups achieved a breakthrough at the Habitat 2 conference in 1996. The conference’s second committee—the so-called partners committee—included global parliamentarians, local authorities, and NGOs. It allowed nongovernmental groups a voice in influencing the intergovernmental debate. The Rio plus-five conference in 1997 witnessed another inroad, as NGOs were allowed into the special session of the General Assembly on Agenda 21; a dozen addressed the plenary session.

Despite the advances, the experience of Habitat’s partners committee is not unanimously recognized as a precedent. The committee’s report was not fully accepted as an official report of the conference; some governments opposed it to the end. However, since 1996, the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the UN (CONGO) has asked that NGO access to the General Assembly be formalized in a legal framework,

and the secretary-general has agreed to support this proposal.

As a result of ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, national and regional NGOs, generally lacking diplomatic experience, started participating in intergovernmental events. Some incidents of improper behavior occurred and antagonized governments. NGOs are aware that such abuses could hurt the NGO movement as a whole: NGOs at the UN are to act as responsible participants and to be as accountable and transparent as they insist governments be. Governments on the NGO Committee at ECOSOC have raised the question of establishing codes of conduct that would go beyond accreditation rules. But external attempts to establish codes of conduct, some NGOs argue, could weaken their diversity and creativity. According to other NGOs, however, codes of conduct could help NGOs to create “an identity for themselves”: seen in this light, codes of conduct would be more than a defense mechanism. The legitimacy of the NGO movement is at stake. The NGO movement needs to be able to say, “This is who we are” (Peeters 1999h).

The tension between NGOs and governments complicates the work of the UN. The UN is an organization of member-states. The Secretariat cannot force member-states to take any particular action. The Secretariat walks a delicate line to “try and make sure that we listen to NGOs, that they have access and opportunities and at the same time to ensure that governments are the official representatives. . . . the secretary-general has a moral compass of his own, a vision of a world that is more open and all embracing. He takes the opportunity to at least raise these questions as opportunities, not threats,” Sorensen explains (Peeters 1999g).

The UN uses its partnership with NGOs as a way to strengthen its capacity for governance. Secretary-General Annan’s report *Arrangements and Practices for the Interaction of Non-governmental Organizations in All Activities of the United Nations System* was included in the agenda of the 1998 General Assembly dealing with “strengthening of the UN system”: partnership with NGOs reinforces the UN system. The UN and the global NGO community have a mutual interest in their alliance. NGOs are indeed recognized as the Secretariat’s “natural network: they have numbers in millions, they have expertise, they have capacities to communicate and mobilize and lobby, which the UN does not” (Peeters 1999g).

By and large, UN partnership with NGOs is seen as the “inevitable model for the future” (Sorensen 1999). In the *Arrangement and Practices* report, Annan wrote that “the advantages of this increased NGO participation cannot be overestimated.” He officially recognized that NGOs have shaped “in significant ways the international development and political debates.” They have contributed

additional knowledge and information into the decision-making process; they have raised new issues. . . that were subsequently addressed by the UN; they have provided expert advice in areas where they were the main actors; and they have contributed greatly to a broad consensus-building process (Annan 1998c).

Looking ahead, Annan sees “a world of opportunities for stronger ties among us. . . I see a United Nations keenly aware that if the global agenda is to be properly addressed, a partnership with civil society is not an

option: it is a necessity.” He wishes to give “global civil society its rightful place as one of the pillars of the international community in the twenty-first century” (Annan 1999i), a statement loaded with implications.

The UN-NGO relationship is increasingly diversified. The scope of NGO participation, once limited to socioeconomic and environmental areas, has broadened to political questions, such as Palestine, disarmament, antipersonnel mines, and the implementation of certain conventions regarding the environment. The leadership role of NGOs in initiatives wins high praise: the areas include the convention to ban landmines, campaigns challenging the legality of nuclear weapons, the establishment of an International Criminal Court, and opposition to global economic agreements—most notably the Multilateral Agreement on Investments, NGOs’ awareness-raising campaigns to provide debt relief to the poorest countries—or the campaigns for the abolition of child soldiers, and for sharp restrictions on the trade of small arms. On numerous occasions the secretary-general has hailed the success of “the new diplomacy.”

The Secretariat, however, does not work with all civil society groups. Groups that lobby for specific interests that are not compatible with stated UN policy are the implicit “enemies” of the partners. In this category are pro-life groups, the legalized cannabis campaign, and, until recently, the business community nearly in toto. There are also explicit enemies, which Annan called “uncivil society”: “terrorists, drug traffickers, those engaged in organizing prostitution and trafficking in women and children”(Annan 1997a).

Greater UN-NGO coordination and experience have led to greater consensus among the NGOs themselves. NGOs had clashed on several issues. For instance, feminist and population control NGOs have clashed, the former reacting against the coercive strategies of the latter. Environmental and development groups have clashed, too, the former considering environmental protection an absolute. Environmental, development, and human rights groups do not always see eye to eye either. Some environmental NGOs would lobby for the conservation of forests while development NGOs (from the South) would promote their exploitation. Because of a better understanding of issues and convergence, now the South would presumably go on exploiting its natural resources, but in a manner devoted to sustainable growth. Naturally, the greater consensus among NGOs will never extend to all areas: the conflicts, for instance, between population control and pro-life groups will never be resolved. One may also doubt the extent to which better mutual understanding, no matter how much it is praised in speeches, actually translates into different actual positions and behaviors.

Participation in the UN forced the NGO movement as a whole—encouraged by the UN Secretariat—to improve its organizational ability. The NGO networks of the 1970s and 1980s turned into formal caucuses and committees in the 1990s. Caucuses focus on themes, such as the rights of children, values, and women, or regions, such as Africa. The caucuses, then, group NGOs around issues of common interest. But they are hardly representative of their constituency despite their frequent claims. To grant maximum freedom to the NGO movement for ever greater and strengthened NGO participation, NGO networks such as WOCSOC consider it a main strength of NGOs that “all the opinions on all the issues of the world are covered by somebody working in civil society. On almost any issue there is a civil society group working for or against whatever one works for or against” (Peeters 1999g). This is how NGOs tend to understand representation.

The Secretariat “welcomes” the exponential development of the NGO movement despite the difficulty in managing it. Some NGOs are entirely positive, others naïve and confused. A few compete with each other, others disguise their mission. Some inflate their membership. Others portray the UN as the opponent.

Are NGOs really representative of civil society? Do some NGOs dominate other NGOs? The UN Secretariat has shown no willingness to address the question of dominance and the potential hijacking of the NGO movement by radical NGOs. In fact, the Secretariat says privately that any risk of abuse “must be managed by NGOs themselves. There are umbrella NGOs that try and make sure that there is no domination of one NGO over another” (Peeters 1998e).

The Strengthening of the UN System

No sooner was the cycle of global conferences completed (December 1996) than the UN reform process was officially launched (July 1997). Reform was not intended to be merely bureaucratic, geared toward greater efficiency. Reform is to enable the UN to recognize that the new global consensus had given it a new mandate, to act on it, and thereby to change the entire organization fundamentally—but quietly.

The new mandate would provide the organization with a unity of purpose. To regain credibility and strength, the UN would have to speak with one voice—the greatest challenge of UN reform, according to Annan. The new global platform and the plans to revitalize UN bodies thus converged. Reform would help eliminate overlap and would clearly identify each part’s comparative advantage. The concept of comparative advantage emerged to bolster the UN claim to global leadership. The UN and each agency in relation to the whole and to other agencies have a “comparative advantage” to become “a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development” (UNDP 1999b). Neutrality, objectivity, and the capacity to address global issues that have won the day allegedly fall under the UN’s comparative advantage. Each UN agency has such an advantage in applying the global consensus: an evolution implicitly moving toward the recognition of virtual “ministries of global governance.”

The rationale for UN reform has often used the argument of the new mandate. The argument appears self-evident to the stakeholders of reform. First, the member states are “committed” to enact the programs of action agreed at the conferences. Second, because of the intergovernmental consensus, the UN has been designated as the structure in charge of helping governments implement the agreed programs. The UN justified its adoption of the new consensus as its mandate by the way it presented the goals of its global conferences as a rediscovery of the true spirit of the UN charter adapted to the post-Cold War global world.

The new mandate centers on socioeconomic concerns and thereby proves most apt to rejuvenate the ECOSOC, as well as UN agencies, funds, and programs. The Security Council—the predominant component of the UN at its founding—no longer seems to be the center of gravity of the system. The new paradigm presented the shift from security as containment of Communist imperialism to a security for human concerns. According to the mandate, human security is an imperative: there is no alternative. The General Assembly is perceived as a place of tension, where the political will of member-states to implement their commitments is persistently challenged; hence, the Secretariat took on the leadership role here.

The global consensus provided all these UN bodies and associates with a common new language and vision. Many went through restructuring and reform. For example, in 1995 the Food and Agriculture Organization established a new department on sustainable development with three divisions: women and population issues (following up on Cairo and Beijing); research, extension, and training (post-Rio); and rural development and participatory methodologies (in the spirit of Copenhagen and Istanbul). WHO created a division for family and reproductive health. When Brundtland became director-general, the health agency went through restructuring and created a cluster on sustainable development. The World Bank, which had been restructuring its networks to implement global conferences, in 1993 inaugurated a section on environmentally sustainable development, which later, significantly, became the section on environmentally and socially sustainable development.

Focal points on cross-cutting issues, such as gender and human rights, were systematically created to ensure system-wide mainstreaming of the new paradigms. Several positions were created to facilitate the mainstreaming of the new concepts and system-wide coordination. After Beijing, Rosario Green, assistant secretary-general and special political adviser to the secretary-general, was charged by the secretary-general with ensuring systemic implementation of the Beijing platform for action. France Donnay, senior advisor at UNICEF's women's health program division, was made responsible for mainstreaming women's issues at the children's fund. Herrell was named WHO's human rights focal point. Erik Chrispeels, UNCTAD's senior legal advisor, became the counterpoint at the Conference on Trade and Development.

The UN Secretariat merged three departments to produce a department of economic and social affairs (DESA) to "promote broad-based and sustainable development through a multidimensional and integrated approach to economic, social, environmental, population and gender related aspects of development." The department focuses on "promoting internationally agreed goals and objectives and monitoring the implementation of the programs, objectives and platforms of action agreed at UN conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly in the economic, social and related fields" (Nitin Desai 2000). The program's policy framework is based on global conferences. It has a consensus-building mission. Its work addresses the second and third committees of the General Assembly (the Economic and Financial Committee and the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee) and ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies: in other words, the intergovernmental process.

As UN reform progressed, it became increasingly clear that the strengthening of the UN was moving toward the institutionalization or strengthening of global governance. Enhancing the UN system is viewed as more relevant to advancing global governance than restoring and promoting the intergovernmental process. To globalize and enforce the new standards, the emphasis is put on the normative function of UN agencies. The Secretariat increasingly asserts its "guidance role" in normative and consensus-building activities.

The UN continues to maintain that its mandate comes from governments. But governments do not genuinely own the consensus. The divorce between formal legality and new forms of legality will be finalized if governments continue to be passive and yield to civil society and UN pressure, UN-NGO awareness-raising campaigns, and long-term programs of action. The direction that UN coordination and strengthening is taking

leads to a greater centralization of power in and around the Secretariat and potentially to an ultimate shift from global governance to de facto global government. UN staff, however, would interpret that analysis as a misconception of the reform process and of the partners' intentions: "Make sure that you understand that global governance does not mean one world government," Sorensen advised (Peeters 1999g).

Maurice Strong was named executive coordinator for UN reform in January 1997; Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette replaced him in January 1998. The position concerns internal management and coordination, particularly in the economic, social, and development work of the UN—the areas addressed by the new consensus. The most important feature of the strengthening of the Secretariat, however, was the secretary-general's creation of a senior management group (departments heads of the Secretariat and senior officials of the UN, including funds and programs), which meets with him every week.

Annan also created four executive committees, addressing the five core areas of the UN: peace and security, economic and social affairs, development cooperation, humanitarian affairs, and human rights. The latter, as the fifth core area, was designated a cross-cutting issue: the high commissioner for human rights participates in all executive committees. There are now simple mechanisms to make everybody part of the same team. Senior officials consider each other as colleagues. Some see in the creation of the senior management group, the executive committees, and the post of deputy secretary-general an intention to establish an informal cabinet in lieu of granting the Secretariat (informal) executive or leadership powers. It is, at least, a meeting of influential people all sharing the same vision and determined to move "from agenda to action."

In the UN reform process, the Administrative Committee on Coordination has played a discrete but decisive role. The ACC hosts biannual meetings of the chief administrative officers (now significantly called executive heads) of UN agencies, funds, and programs—including the Bretton Woods institutions—with the secretary-general. The committee works closely with the UN Secretariat. It does not deal directly with the intergovernmental bodies but reaches them through the Secretariat. The current key strategizers of the UN system belong to the ACC and the Secretariat.

ACC meetings have become strategically crucial, although they have little visibility. In the 1990s the ACC started to reform itself into a streamlined structure and also adopted a more policy-oriented focus: the committee had focused on administrative issues. Executive heads now actively guide the system. Meetings feature discussions of policy issues that concern the entire UN system. The ACC has sought to develop an "integrated and coordinated approach" to the follow-up of international conferences. Follow-up to the conferences is considered an aspect of the broader reform of the UN system. The so-called cross-cutting themes of the global conferences, such as the eradication of poverty, gender mainstreaming, human rights and the role of civil society, are foremost in the ACC's work and in UN reform.

To address such themes, the ACC established three ad hoc interagency task forces in October 1995. (Similar task forces were created at the agency level. At WHO, a Task Force on Health in Development worked from 1993 to 1997 to integrate health into the new paradigm.) The first ACC task force concerned basic social services for all, with, significantly, UNFPA as the lead agency—confirmation of the centrality of

reproductive health as a major cross-cutting issue. It dealt with primary health care, basic education, reproductive health, water and sanitation, and crisis situations. The ILO led the second task force on full employment and sustainable livelihoods. It considered the impact of globalization and of technological changes. Last, the World Bank headed the task force on an enabling environment for economic and social development. In addition, an Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality was created and was headed by the secretary-general's special advisor on gender issues. As a result of the work accomplished by the task forces, UN agencies, funds, and programs now have a common policy. Two principles of action were validated: the synergy of economic growth and investment in the social sector, and a general consensus within the UN on the policy framework for implementing the goals of the global conferences. Sustainable development was the inclusive framework; the eradication of poverty was the fundamental commitment.

The task forces were discontinued after completing their assignments. In his 1998 report, Annan remarked that "productive relations with the UN system as a whole, including the Bretton Woods Institutions, have been expanded and deepened through the ACC" (Annan 1998c). The ACC machinery had been put to full use for coordinated follow-up to conferences and had consequently strengthened the leadership of the Secretariat.

At the intergovernmental level, the implementation and follow-up of the global conferences became the task of ECOSOC. At its 1995 substantive session, ECOSOC had launched a major initiative to "translate the internationally agreed goals and objectives into a consistent set of national strategies, policies, and programs for the implementation of which the UN system could provide integrated support to Governments" (Annan 1998a). ECOSOC provides guidelines, at both intergovernmental and interagency levels, for developing a coordinated response and implementing the UN's global conferences. (The twenty-some themes from the global conferences include the enabling environment, employment and sustainable livelihoods, basic social services for all, equity and the empowerment of women, a stable macroeconomic policy framework conducive to development, and the eradication of poverty and hunger.) The UN system as a whole could then help the governments of member-states with their follow-up of the global meetings.

ECOSOC coordinates the preparations of the five-year reviews of the conferences. Its commissions exchange inputs on the cross-cutting issues of the conferences. Each review benefits from the results of existing five-year reviews. This work allows the movement to go forward. All in all, coordination means that the UN system strategically focuses on a few common priorities, which is in fact the agenda of the partners.

The ECOSOC has begun developing basic indicators to measure development, beyond the usual economic indicators. They include social, environmental, and institutional measures. In April 1995 the Commission on Sustainable Development released an initial list of 134 such indicators; the final set is to be released in 2001. The indicators will be an important mechanism for the UN to monitor implementation of the global agenda nation by nation.

An intergovernmental organization, the UN Development Program is linked to the UN General Assembly through ECOSOC. The unit has played an important role in UN reform, one recognized by Annan for its success in reinventing itself and in pursuing sustainable development. The renewed UNDP operates

both at the headquarters level through the Secretariat and at the country level. UNDP has a primary charge in eradicating poverty and enabling good governance, sustainable livelihoods, the advancement of women, democratization and political empowerment, and the sustainable management of environmental resources—a mission that UNDP accomplishes as a partner of governments, other UN bodies, and outside agencies in collaboration with civil society groups and the private sector. Activities have taken a new direction, particularly regarding transitions to a market economy, development in the private sector, and globalization in general.

Through its 132 country offices and resident coordinators, UNDP serves more than 170 countries and territories around the world and coordinates all UN projects in the field. After the ACC task forces folded their operations, a workshop was convened in Turin in December 1997 to continue that work and specifically to give the UNDP system of resident coordinators integrated guidelines for developing a coordinated approach at the country level. The coordinator system was strengthened and now occupies a key function of responding to the whole UN system in the field. The change has structurally engaged the global-to-local process. The goal was to increase UN output to governments, the recipients of UN operations.

To apply the work of the ACC task forces at the country level, UNDP started work on the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which serves as a common framework for all UN development funds, programs, and agencies, particularly for country-level follow-up to global conferences and General Assembly resolutions. The secretary-general has designated UNDAF the centerpiece of UN cooperation for development at the country level. Just as the reinvigorated Secretariat strengthens the UN at headquarters, UNDAF strengthens the UN system as a whole in the field. The framework was deemed necessary to overcoming fragmentation and overlap. It sets out a common vision. UNDAF has now completed its pilot phase. All countries to which UNDAF applies will have started working on the framework by 2002.

UNDAF is a single instrument for coordinating and maximizing the effects of country-level programs and funds from various UN units and for identifying priorities for action. Under the direction of the UNDP resident coordinator as the leader of the UN country team, all UN funds and programs join together to prepare the UNDAF. Each UNDAF begins with a review of the development situation of a particular country: the common country assessment (CCA). The CCA allows the UN country team to work together with the governments, NGOs, and other civil society groups. The UN describes the country's situation with the help of indicators referring both to general development goals and to the more specific goals of the global conferences and UN conventions. Because the CCA and UNDAF are designed in partnership with national governments, they are described as country-led and bottom-up. But with the UNDP resident coordinator in the field playing the guidance role that the UN Secretariat plays at the global level, couldn't this process be described as the localization of global governance?

At UN headquarters the secretary-general formed, as part of his reform package, the UN Development Group (UNDG), composed of all UN funds, programs, and agencies involved in development. The UNDG is an internal mechanism for policy and operational coordination. UNDP plays a central

coordination role in UNDG.

The Millennium Events

In his reform proposal to the General Assembly, the secretary-general suggested that the year 2000 session of the General Assembly be the millennium assembly. Annan also suggested a millennium summit and a parallel millennium NGO forum. The secretary-general's millennium report, issued in April 2000, presented his vision for the future of the UN, building on the new consensus. A political declaration, called the *United Nations Millennium Declaration* and adopted by the General Assembly, resulted from the millennium summit. Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their "faith" in the organization and their commitment to strengthen the UN. They identified freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility as the values "to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century." Member states resolved to "achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects," to strengthen the ECOSOC, the International Court of Justice and to ensure "greater policy coherence . . . between the United Nations, its agencies, the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization" in order to achieve "a fully coordinated approach to the problems of peace and development" (UN General Assembly 2000).

The millennium events coincided with a critical time for the UN. The partners argue that world government exists, but not at the United Nations. Global policy, they say, is decided behind closed doors by exclusive groups, such as the G8, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. The agencies are reinforced by informal networks of high officials and powerful alliances such as NATO and the European Union. Together they have created the dominant and exclusive institutions of world government. All too often they are influenced by transnational corporations that pursue their own world strategies. To prevent marginalization, Annan sees that the UN must come up with a new vision and a new platform for itself.

The Millennium NGO Forum took place May 22–26, 2000, three months before the millennium summit; its final outcome—significantly issued as an official document of the General Assembly—could thus go on to world leaders at the millennium summit. Some 1,350 participants, claiming to represent not only global civil society but also "we the peoples of the United Nations," gathered to consult on the global challenges of the future. The themes were peace, security, and disarmament; the eradication of poverty; human rights; sustainable development and the environment; the challenge of globalization (achieving equity, justice, and diversity); the strengthening and democratization of the UN and other international institutions. It was the first time that NGOs got together around cross-sectoral themes. At global conferences the approach had been compartmentalized. At the forum it was holistic.

Three main NGO conferences, each supported in one way or another by the UN Secretariat, had taken place in 1999 to prepare for the Millennium NGO Forum. These exercises illustrated the degree of organization attained by the international NGO community over one decade and how NGOs are increasingly asserting themselves as a global policymaking sector. First, on May 11–15, 1999, a gathering on peace and international justice was held in The Hague, with some 10,000 participants. The themes were the

strengthening of international law and peace as a human right; the prevention of violent conflict; the abolition of war (a radical objective); disarmament; and the roots of war. The goals are in line with the redefinition of peace and security and with the paradigm of prevention. NGOs issued a plan of action, the *Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the Twenty-first Century*, which states that “it is time to redefine security in terms of human and ecological needs instead of national sovereignty and national borders.”

On October 10–15, 1999, an international conference of NGOs took place in Seoul and issued a declaration and draft plan of action to be discussed at the millennium forum: NGOs were asserting themselves as global policymakers. The plan of action identified eleven areas of concern, reflecting priorities common to NGOs and the UN: peace and security, human rights, gender equality, social and economic development, youth and children, public, reproductive and mental health, education for all, productive ageing, ethics and values, environment and human settlements, and, not least, the empowerment and strengthening of NGOs. In this plan of action NGOs formulated recommendations to the UN and to governments, and they committed themselves to continue pressuring governments not only to implement global conferences, but to ratify international treaties and abide by them. NGOs continue campaigning for their various agendas and holding governments and the private sector accountable for human rights. They are working to gain a role in evaluating governments’ records and upgrading their legal status.

The World Civil Society (WOCSOC) conference, “Building Global Governance Partnerships,” was held in Montreal December 7–11, 1999, with some five hundred NGO delegates and experts. NGOs suggested improved intergovernmental leadership and support for NGOs on governmental delegations. Governments were asked to share their power with civil society. Civil society organizations (CSOs) also suggested the creation of a world parliament and a legally enforceable global mechanism, such as a world environment authority, established by a global democratic process. A global legislature and a global environmental court were other issues. The civil society movement clearly supports the strengthening of the UN as the only international forum where their ideals can be furthered. WOCSOC participants insisted that civil society and the state keep their autonomy. Civil society needs strong governments to serve the common good. Civil society will take a lead role in disseminating the various programs of action of global conferences to the local governmental and community levels and continue to pressure governments to implement the international agreements and to ratify international treaties.

Most NGO networks seem to agree that the Millennium NGO Forum should serve as a basis for an ongoing or regular civil society forum—but they disagree on its form and on strategy. The Millennium People’s Assembly Network (MPAN), for instance, has advocated the establishment of a yearly people’s assembly besides the General Assembly. The group focuses on the practical means of proportionally choosing representative global lawmakers and on a strengthened UN Charter to empower the “world’s people.” Others say that the millennium forum should become a biennial civil society forum to foster both policy dialogue and coalition building among NGOs. Some NGOs recommend that this civil society forum should be given observer status at the General Assembly.

Several NGO coalitions, primarily from the United States, have campaigned for a more formal

relationship between the global civil society and the General Assembly to democratize the UN. Groups such as CAMDUN (Campaign for a More Democratic UN) and INFUSA (International Network for a UN Second Assembly) have pushed for the creation of a permanent people's assembly and hope for a bicameral UN. Global representation would then come from the global civil society on the one hand and traditional intergovernmental processes on the other. Such ideas have been circulating in circles more formally connected with the UN. The World Commission on Culture and Development, in its 1996 report *Our Creative Diversity*, had recommended a world forum as a first step toward a bicameral General Assembly, with representatives of accredited NGOs.

The 1999 UNDP *Human Development Report* formally supports the creation of a bicameral assembly to allow representation by the civil society. By such advocacy the UNDP, an intergovernmental body, certainly does not reflect the view of the member-states. The UN Secretariat, at this stage, does not officially support this project.

The millennium events were meant to be a milestone in UN-NGO-member-state interaction. The NGO community generally viewed the events as a decisive move toward a democracy based on interactive participation, "participatory democracy" -an evolution that both the UN and NGOs deem irreversible. They intended to use this opportunity to promote their partnership with governments at the General Assembly.

The UN Secretariat sees democracy enhanced by the expanded participation of NGOs. *Democratizing the UN* generally means giving more power and representation to NGOs and superseding hierarchical relations with "partnerships." The evolution is considered necessary because all world problems are now global, and the traditional democratic process has allegedly failed to address global issues. However, the participation of NGOs in policymaking will continue to weaken the traditional democratic process.

In practice, power has devolved from member-governments to the UN and from the UN to NGOs, with two consequences. First, the NGO movement has given substance to the UN culture, values, and praxis. Second, the UN achieves by indirection, through NGOs, what budgetary or statutory limitations would not permit the world organization to accomplish: the implementation of the new consensus. But in this process the UN overlooks the special interests and the radical agenda of these groups: an agenda wrongly assumed to represent the views and consensus of member-governments.

The strategy of some bolder NGO networks has shifted from global governance as a vague political concept to planning the creation of institutions of a world democracy. The groups are small, but most are active with the UN and the millennium NGO forum. They are promoting global citizenship, world citizen parties, accountable world government, a strong regime of international law, a world parliament, and a charter for global democracy. The charter calls for building "public support and political will to create a democratic and inclusive system of international decision-making" (Charter 99). In 1998 a Swedish-based NGO network called Starlife Friends proposed the formation of a network for world citizen political parties in different countries to bring into national politics the global ideals of the Millennium People's Assembly Network and the world citizen and the world federalist movements.

The Global Coalition World Democracy 2010 (GCWD) emerged at the Hague Appeal for Peace in

1999. The coalition seeks, as a first step, global public debate on establishing a world democracy. The long-term goal is to create “global and democratic sovereign institutions” because global problems require equally global solutions, including global legislatures, courts, and institutions. GCWD conceptualized seven design principles for such institutions: innate sovereignty of the individual; sovereignty of the people expressed through direct or representative democracy; the rule of law; problem solving at the most local level practicable (the subsidiarity principle); institutional and procedural transparency; peaceful means to build such institutions; non-discrimination.

Conclusions

In the past decade the NGO movement has grown exponentially in two directions: the number of NGOs has multiplied and their influence has grown. Certainly, numerical proliferation of civil society groups and their activism manifest a desire for people’s participation, cultural creativity, and other positive, evolutionary, and spontaneous changes. NGOs have played a useful part in developing a growing and universal awareness of global issues and goals that exceeds the capacity and concerns of national states. Under appropriate political leadership, in particular of the United States, this awareness could have led to and become genuine consensus.

But NGOs moved in the wake of a cultural revolution. They claimed sole ownership of progressive change. Radical groups have kidnapped what was supposed to be a consensus. It has turned into a revolutionary agenda that is no longer attuned to universal aspirations.

In the years ahead the UN will continue to promote its partnership with NGOs. The more the partnership develops, the more the UN actively encourages the NGO movement to become better organized and develop forms of representation at the UN (caucuses, people’s assembly) that challenge the national democratic process away from traditional hierarchical structures toward the institutionalization of participatory democracy and global democracy. This trend has had two consequences. First, strengthening the UN has become a major world policy objective. The NGO movement gives substance to the UN culture and strengthens the UN system. Second, NGOs use the UN to promote their agendas and to cause a revolutionary devolution of power from democratic institutions to the global civil society. The latter will be a dominant trend in world politics if the forward movement is allowed to keep its present momentum. The status of NGOs at the UN will be increasingly formalized. NGOs will lobby for a concrete institutional and legal framework to ensure and expand their participation in key intergovernmental meetings. Resistance to the doctrine that the UN has received the mandate to work with NGOs is not likely to prevail at the international level. NGOs will be seen more and more as the authentic representatives of civil society. What Annan called “the global associational revolution” will continue.

The UN response to uncontrollable numerical growth and the rising influence of NGOs has been selectivity in participation. While extolling the NGO movement as a global manifestation of a new spirit, the UN and its agencies have developed preferential relationships with powerful, mostly Western, NGOs. Effective partnership seems to be reserved for NGOs that support the new agenda. Under such conditions, participatory democracy is no longer representative but lopsided.

The new paradigm rests on the assumption that NGOs are grass-roots organizations and that participatory democracy is the new genuine democracy. The prevailing view is that governments, the UN, and NGOs should assign a high priority to developing a closer and always more effective relationship with civil society. NGOs should participate in shaping UN decisions. Their participation in all UN bodies (including the General Assembly and the Security Council) should be formalized. As the UN and NGOs continue to identify with one another, a shift of emphasis in NGO objectives will take place: NGOs have moved further away from a primarily consultative status (based on grassroots expertise) and services to effective partnership in policy- and decisionmaking.

If governments remain passive and the democratic process continues to be abused, the danger is that the UN-NGO partnership may replace the intergovernmental process altogether. It is argued that member-states are committed to implement the goals and programs agreed at the world conferences and therefore to act in partnership with NGOs and civil society. Governments that oppose this trend will be pressured in various ways to accept it. Governments, business, and social groups (including uncooperative NGOs) that refuse to be co-opted by the NGO movement will be labeled antidemocratic and penalized (by being denied the status and benefits of the UN-NGO partnership). Another major trend is that pressure will be used to induce national governments and organizations such as the European Union to increase their partnership with NGOs.

The same reasoning is applied to the business sector and other stakeholders in global governance. On the one hand, business has been arbitrarily excluded from the civil society; on the other, it is now called on to accept to be co-opted in the forward movement on the partners' own terms to promote their agenda.

The influence and role of NGOs in initiating and coaching the quiet revolution toward global governance are unprecedented. NGOs have definite political objectives, they exert great influence, they wield growing power. The NGO agenda and the intentions that drive the forward movement should be transparent, democratically determined, and achieved within a system of checks and balances. Constitutional precedents justify some form of control on NGO influence. To establish checks on NGO power is no reflection on their right to exist and to act, but their rights should fall within the limits of adequate constitutional legality. The goals, influence, and power of the NGOs in the political process (both national and global) must be addressed with the objective of restoring due process and democratic control. The New Left has been successful because it has assumed leadership while major stakeholders sat on the fence.

A time of responsible political decision is at hand: Right and Left, conservatives and liberal reformists, member-states and the UN itself must determine whether the trend is to be encouraged or brought under control. The more ground that the NGO movement gains, the greater the resistance to its agenda will become and also overall pressure for NGO democratic legitimacy, transparency, and accountability. The quiet revolution's radicalism thus carries the seed of its own undoing. At stake is a devolution of power from national governments and democratic institutions to the UN and to civil society. But effective democratic control of UN activities will be difficult to enact. Institutional arrangements for NGO interaction at the UN are exceedingly complex. The legal and institutional issues involved in NGO-UN cooperation are unresolved (NGO participation in the General Assembly being perhaps the most controversial). No single framework or

coordinating authority exists for interactive participation. Furthermore, the UN has no authority to legislate regulations regarding the NGOs.

To redress the current drift, the first alternative would be to change the UN Charter, the structure of the UN, and the constitutional nature of UN normative power: the UN would formally, by intergovernmental consent, receive a new mandate, would make its recommendations binding, and would become a world government. An opposition and democratic checks and balances would then become necessary in the exercise of UN power. An alternative would be for the UN to remain what it is: its decisions enforced by member-states according to their own norms and democratic processes, with national governments bound by their own constitution and laws. They must obtain democratic approval of UN recommendations by the various branches of their own government. The approach presently used in global governance tends to drift away from the American constitutional tradition. It replaces the democratic rule of national legislation and democratic accountability with nondescript institutions and practices (such as consensus). In the end the absence of transparency could give us the worst of everything: changing, uncertain paradigms, acting by stealth. Only national governments can accomplish the needed reforms. As governments may be unable or unwilling to act, the UN might encroach on national governments and might appropriate a power that it does not legitimately possess.

Various defensive arguments have been advanced to eschew reform. One argument is that the NGO movement represents a form of democracy more advanced than traditional democratic institutions because it deals with people's issues, that we can trust in the nature of revolutionary change, and that the participation of NGOs democratizes the UN. In fact, *democratic representation* itself is being redefined by the UN. *Representation* is conceived "in a more flexible manner": NGOs would represent a more supple form of representation than rigid hierarchical systems. Participatory democracy indirectly penalizes all those who do not participate. As the forward movement secures global ascendancy, any consideration of restricting NGO empowerment is denounced as contradicting the UN's expressed will. This self-interested backlash is an indicator of ideological inbreeding.

Are NGOs representative? The issue of NGO representation has two distinct parameters. The first concerns inner democracy. Do NGOs act as representatives of their own constituencies? By definition, NGOs are self-regulating groups of civil society. A case-by-case analysis would show that the most influential NGOs have a democratic form of organization but that many others do not. But the power wielded, particularly by those that are organized democratically, justifies concern. The need for an adequate legal framework to regulate the internal organization and operation of NGOs will be seen eventually, but the danger is the potential consolidation of the most influential NGOs and civil society groups that pursue special interests. The second parameter concerns the participation of NGOs in UN policymaking: the formulation of UN programs and their follow-up. Do NGOs that interact with the UN represent civil society? Ownership of the agenda has often proved a prerequisite for participation. Those that do not endorse the agenda cannot participate. Obstacles to partnership are identified as antidemocratic. The redefinition of *civil society* in terms of participation is crucial and implies issues of decisive importance.

The Conceptual Framework of the “New Global Consensus”

Building on the foregoing description of the legitimization of the mechanisms for global governance (the process of the new paradigm), this chapter focuses on the conceptual configuration of the new consensus (its contents). Starting from a definition of the nature of consensus, we concentrate on the concepts of sustainability, people-centeredness, and holism, which are the three main components of the new paradigm and the keys to grasping its essence. We conclude with an analysis of the concept of “global governance.”

The new global consensus of the 1990s, presented as an intergovernmental consensus but in fact belonging primarily to the “partners,” has been built by combining an array of new concepts from the world conferences of the last decade. These concepts compose a long list: sustainable development; the right to development; the right to choose and the right to equality; women’s rights; children’s rights; reproductive and sexual health rights; a new social contract founded on the principles of equity and social justice (including health for all, education for all, food security for all, all human rights for all, quality of life for all); the gender perspective; global participatory democracy; sustainable or inclusive democracy; partnerships; empowerment; enablement; capacity building; global governance; quality of life and individual well-being as the goal of development; personal or “individual sovereignty”; the culture of peace; human security; a spiritual consensus on respect for all life forms; and new values such as solidarity and inclusion. Federico Mayor, the former head of UNESCO, has spoken of four new contracts: social, natural or environmental, cultural, and moral. The core concepts of the new global consensus have produced interrelated subsidiary concepts that proceed from the same ideological source and follow the same logical path. The new concepts, which touch all areas of life in the global community, emanate from the fundamental paradigm shift from economic growth and traditional Judeo-Christian values to sustainability, people-centeredness, and holism.

The partners in global governance have turned some concepts of the new consensus into absolute or transcendental norms and principles with supposed moral authority. Together, these norms and principles have produced the so-called new ethics (see chapter five), which consists of the principles of sustainability, equity, partnership, and the right to choose. The new ethics “transcends” the Judeo-Christian ethics and the paradigm of growth. Thus, in the new ethics, a woman’s right to choose “transcends” a child’s right to life; participatory democracy and the value of participation “transcend” traditional representative democracy; the values of sustainability “transcend” those of world religions; the new social contract founded on equity “transcends” the spirit of free enterprise, and so on. These new principles are supposed to rule over all sectors of development. Because they are allegedly “transcendental,” all obstacles to their implementation must be removed.

Consensus and Consensus Building

The purported new global consensus is, in principle, intergovernmental, but, as we have seen, it primarily belongs to the “partners” in “global governance.” The concepts undergirding the consensus were embodied in the action programs of the world conferences, now being implemented through the mechanisms of global governance.

Governance is a process but it also has conceptual content. The same applies to consensus. Consensus building is the process by which the new paradigm was forged and is being adopted. Governance has consensual objectives and leads to substantive realizations, or, in normal English, to real outcomes. These outcomes are obviously more important than the concepts used in bringing them about.

Implicit in the novelty of the consensus is the almost complete break of the new paradigm from the former paradigm. The new consensus includes a new green revolution, new societal contracts, new rights, a new health-for-all policy, a new universal ethic, global governance as a new way of managing international cooperation, consensus building as a new way of reaching agreement, partnerships as a new form of politics, and people-centeredness, sustainability, and holism as a new intellectual paradigm tying all of the foregoing together. The consensus interprets the UN Charter in a new way and represents a new vision for the international community, valid for the post-colonial, post-Cold War, and post-modern age. It gives the UN system a new mandate.

The consensus is new also because of its global scope: it is supposed to be equally applicable to the North, including Europe and America, and the South, the East, and the West, whereas traditional development applied exclusively to the Southern Hemisphere. The consensus is new, as well, because it is systemic: in an unprecedented way, its language and programmatic priorities have been mainstreamed throughout the UN system, its specialized agencies, funds, programs, and the Bretton Woods institutions. The new consensus has had an impact on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organization. It is also multisectoral, while the former approach was sectoral. It needs to be new, its proponents claim, in order to match the new context of globalization. As they see it, a Copernican turn has taken place in education, culture, and politics, replacing the decrepit Ptolemaic formulations of the error-strewn past.

The 1994 Cairo conference is the decisive watershed in the history of the global consensus. According to Jyoti Shankar Singh, the executive coordinator of the Cairo conference, “Cairo began with uncertainties and tensions; it ended in a blaze of glory” (Singh 1998, 161). The partners founded and started consolidating the global consensus on the Cairo “victory.” Reproductive and sexual health issues occupy a predominant, if not invasive, place in the new consensus, metastasizing from health issues to most other areas. The partners have claimed that controversies regarding abortion and reproductive rights were resolved, “leading to a broad consensus at the conference on a comprehensive definition of reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health” (Singh 1998, xv). The process that led to the Cairo consensus included conceptual developments build on the basis of successive breakthroughs. Family planning had first been identified as a

basic right (Tehran conference, 1968). Then came the shift from family planning to a definition of reproductive health—a much broader concept—and finally the declaration of a right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health (International Conference on Population and Development [ICPD] 1994). At the Cairo conference, the partners hijacked the concept of people-centeredness, founding it on reproductive health and rights—in other words, on the arbitrary right to choose.

What happened in Cairo illustrates well how consensus building as a process and the contents of the consensus are intermingled. As intergovernmental decisions were reached by consensus at the world conferences, consensus came to be viewed as the political process by which these decisions were to be made and implemented. The intergovernmental decisions—the substantive outcome of these conferences—then also came to be called consensus; one speaks of the Rio consensus or the Beijing consensus. Put together, the conferences produced a single new global consensus, the outcome of an enduring consensus-building process led by global governance partners. A universal consensus is said to exist on the basis of the conferences' collective agenda and on the implementation of their resulting programs of action.

The manner in which consensus is both a verb and a noun, in effect, illustrates the circularity of the entire process. As a verb, so to speak, consensus is the way agreement is reached; as a noun, it is the substance of what has been agreed. The conflation of the two meanings of the word works to confer a sense of authority, as if to say, because we reached agreement in a good way, the agreements we reached must also be good. As anyone the slightest bit familiar with philosophy knows, this is a major category error, a logical fallacy of the first order. As a propaganda tactic, however, it is hard to beat.

As the partners mean it, “consensus” always has substantive contents, and consensus building is never a neutral process. In the traditional democratic process, important decisions are reached by majority vote, constitutional procedures, a cabinet, legislatures, and courts. The process is neutral as regards the outcome. Article 18/2 of the UN Charter specifies that “decisions of the General Assembly on important questions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.” Such decisions relate inter alia to international peace and security, budgetary questions, the election of the non-permanent members of the Security Council, and the election of the members of ECOSOC and of the Trusteeship Council. The UN Charter did not provide for the issues that have shaped the new paradigm of international cooperation—the consensus—and are now considered important: environment, social equity, population stabilization, and so on. These issues had been considered marginal, but in the post-Cold War era, they have been made central: they are the new “important questions” in the sense of the Charter. The programs of action of the world conferences came from consensus and the process stipulated by the Charter for important decisions was ignored. In the 1990s, important decisions have thus come from consensus, not majority vote: this is a revolutionary political development.

Today, as in the past, UN General Assembly decisions are recommendations. Likewise, consensus documents and their follow-on documents from global conferences, endorsed at special sessions of the General Assembly, are also theoretically non-binding. Yet the partners' standard of implementation of the conferences' platforms for action are more rigorous than those of the recommendations obtained by majority vote at the

General Assembly: the partners' global governance mechanisms described in the first chapter support and monitor the implementation of the conferences' consensus. These mechanisms, which are in many ways operational, have rendered decision-making by consensus effective and efficient. As a result, the traditional democratic process for "important decisions" has been relativized and is losing power at the intergovernmental level.

The way the partners obtained, interpreted, and implemented the consensus caught member-states by surprise. They did not realize the nature of the consensus process nor how it was used without their consent to enlarge the UN mandate and indeed change their own democratic institutions. As opposed to the traditional democratic process, whereby decisions become binding at set dates, a consensus is built step by step, and enactment is progressive—and invisible. The consensus progressively becomes binding by stealth, through monitoring programs, the reinterpretation of existing treaties, relentless coaching by NGOs, the establishment of weighted global indicators of progress and follow-up mechanisms, which are the essence of UN "reform."

The conceptual framework of consensus building was elaborated by social scientists. Academic social scientists and affiliates at various research institutes have developed techniques and model strategies for consensus building, conflict resolution, and problem solving methods for handling values conflict and non-negotiable differences.

For example, the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), established in 1993 in Cambridge, Massachusetts (and linked to the MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program), has advised the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat, ambassadors to the WTO, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. CBI's objective is to "advance public understanding of the theory and practice of dispute resolution and consensus-building." Its rationale is that the vertical top-down "decide-announce-defend model" used by government officials and parliamentary procedure has become inadequate or "unacceptable." Consensus building is not meant to replace but to complement the traditional decision-making patterns in government agencies, courts of law, legislatures, and business management. Consensus building "generates solutions that are fairer, more efficient, better informed and more stable than those arrived at by conventional means." Achieving a "definitive and satisfying outcome without relying either on majority rule or unanimity" (CBI 1998) is said to ensure that agreements represent more than a political compromise of individual interests.

The partners argue that the techniques to gain consensus are now genuinely-scientific procedures and, as such, have acquired unquestioned prestige among this self-styled international elite. In their view, what is deemed scientific is authoritative, if not compelling. The partners therefore argue that consensus building "can and should be applied to the broadest possible range of problems" (CBI 1998).

The validity of the concept of consensus building cannot be so simply determined. The developers of the concept tend to be kindred spirits of the partners. Some are, intellectually speaking, wholly owned subsidiaries of the partners' forward movement. The key test is the manner in which the concept has been operationalized, the agenda of those who used it and their purpose, and, last but not least, the exclusion of those who do not share their views. As the partners use it, consensus refers to shared or collective enlightened

opinion and agreement reached as the outcome of the process of consensus building. Naturally enough, those who do not share this opinion and are obstacles to agreement are to be excluded from the process. The UN and NGOs are using consensus building techniques to promote their own goals, which is another form of useful circularity in the partners' system.

Social science has spelled out specific requirements for consensus building, such as facilitation assistance and formal commitment to the rules of consensus building. As with any technique, consensus building can be employed for a purpose that it is transparent and legitimate, or for one that is devious and undemocratic. Let us now identify some of the phases of consensus building.

At the beginning of the consensus-building process is a *vision* "owned" by "enlightened" individuals or groups: participants in the 1991 Stockholm Initiative, for instance, or the NGOs that have participated in the UN global conferences, were "visionaries." Without the intuitive foresight and the leadership of the *innovators*, the forward movement cannot take off, and creative change cannot come about. Vision implies transcending the mere collective opinion or the "sum of individual interests" (CBI 1998). It bequeaths responsibility to the enlightened individual or group to upset stereotypes and to establish new power relationships to enact the needed changes. The transition from the original vision of the leading partner to other people is crucial.

The task and responsibility of the innovator have two parameters: first, the aspirations and needs of the people, and second, pragmatic feasibility. When the process of change is engaged and concerned individuals or groups become aware of their needs and rights, the innovator turns into the *facilitator of change*. The rationale concerning "facilitation" has several implications. First, facilitation is strategic, for consensus building always has a purpose. The innovator is a person of purpose and therefore a leader in the achievement of worthy goals: the partners have an agenda. Second, a certain connaturality of purpose is presupposed between both the facilitator and those who are to be led into change. The latter are called *stakeholders*, that is, those who have an interest in the proposed change and a role to play in implementing it. If such a connaturality did not exist, change would have to be imposed top-down, and consensus building would be fake, or would become, at best, enlightened despotism. The supposed existence of connaturality is indeed the crux of the consensus-building process. People have aspirations and needs that the facilitator can "awaken" through *awareness raising*, which persuades them that change will "actualize." Facilitation is not founded on aspirations alone, but on basic realities, both material and spiritual, individual and cultural, which shape the identity of people and nations. As opposed to top-down decision-making processes, consensus building is perceived as people-centered and participatory: it invites all stakeholders to participate in policy and decision-making. Participation creates an interaction between decision makers and stakeholders and claims to include all viewpoints as equal.

Following vision and facilitation, the link of connaturality between the facilitator's vision and the stakeholders' aspirations or needs becomes *interactive*. The participating actors become aware not only of their needs but of "development potentialities." The result, of course, is "synergy."

Put a little differently, a will to abandon confrontational attitudes is a prerequisite of consensus building. For it to come about, there must be a global shift from a win-lose to a win-win perspective.

Theoretically, facilitation has no losers. Consensus building advances through informal “dialoguing,” face-to-face interaction, not through imposition. The possibility of “a shared, desired future condition” (CBI 1998) soon comes into view. Once consensus has been reached, it is “owned” by all participatory stakeholders and then implemented by the partners.

Is the new global consensus democratic? UN bureaucrats and NGO partners now call the conferences’ documents *consensus documents*. The consensus is said to be intergovernmental. It is true that governments ascribed, for instance, to the Cairo, Beijing, and Istanbul platforms—though at times with substantial reservations. But governments were not the authors of the policies they have been pressured to implement. They were not the “innovators” nor the “facilitators” of the alleged consensus. Dissenting at the world conferences, too, was not politically feasible. Governments’ only choice was between being a full or a partial partner to the consensus. In the latter case, they could issue reservations. In both cases, however, they joined the consensus. Nothing can hold back the implementation of the consensus. “Enlightened” individuals and groups—the partners, not governments—defined the goals and priorities of governance, made them global, and pushed for the implementation of a radical agenda. They forged a new ethic of responsibility and acted all along as the self-appointed managers of social transformation. Under such conditions is the “intergovernmental” consensus legitimate according to ordinary, common sensical democratic criteria?

At the 1999 Seoul International NGO Conference, Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette highlighted the role of the UN as the facilitator in consensus building:

At the world conferences, the United Nations played the harmonizing role envisaged in its founding Charter—a forum where diverse points of view were aired, where proposals were debated and where, most importantly, political consensus was achieved. Indeed, by bringing together high-level political leaders with parliamentarians, women’s groups, academics, business people and trade unions, a real sense of “stake-holding” was created, not only for the duration of the negotiating process, but with momentum for the essential follow-up work over the months and years (Fréchette 1999b).

Implicit in her remarks, the role of the UN has evolved from facilitating consensus among member-states to facilitating consensus among all stakeholders, from an intergovernmental process to a global governance process. The shift is key in evaluating the legitimacy of the intergovernmental consensus. Partnerships are not illegal—but are they democratic? The consensus was not reached through dialogue and participation with the principal stakeholders of sustainable development, namely, governments and business, and indeed with people in general. Furthermore, the promoters of the consensus of global conferences have given themselves the task of implementation: hardly an indicator of legitimate democratic procedures.

The partners assume that their vision and the goals supposedly agreed to by UN member-states at the global conferences of the 1990s are the same. In 1996, at the end of the conference process, Federico Mayor “sincerely” thought that the consensus had provided answers in all critical areas, so that all member-states could now move together towards the same goals. He affirmed that member-states had told UN agencies and

their partners what to do. He spoke as if the consensus represented the view of each nation, as if the new vision indeed came from individual nations. But consensus was not reached through dialoguing and interactive participation with the principal stakeholders of sustainable development, namely governments and business, and indeed with people in general.

Furthermore, a moral value is attached to the consensus and the partners denounce any lack of will in its implementation as a return to *Realpolitik*. The outcomes of the conferences, said Gustave Speth, former UNDP Administrator, represent “societies at their best” and the people’s “best aspirations.” But when the conferences are over, he said, national governments tend to “go back to business as usual” and to act “in a self-centred way” (Peeters 1996e). The partners see a lack of political will as the only reason why governments do not implement their own commitments. Their apathy has been remedied by pressure, awareness raising campaigns, education by the media and, most important, by the convergent action of civil society networks instrumental in moving the consensus from agenda to action. We will see in the next chapters how national governments have been invited or pressured to build a national consensus patterned on the global consensus and to formulate a capacity-building strategy for implementing the consensus in key areas such as education, human rights, and culture. By and large, the ways used by the partners in the implementation process do not qualify as consensual. The legitimacy of consensus as substitute to the democratic process indeed hangs on the answer to questions that should now be asked: What have the UN, its agencies and its NGO partners achieved over the past decade? Why were these achievements pursued? Through lack of awareness, governments gave substance to leftist vaporings. They did not realize that by participating in the process and the mechanisms of implementation of the UN consensus, they indiscriminately endorsed its contents.

Consensus building is a pragmatic way to reach any objective. There is no absolute consensus, that is, a consensus that is unconditionally evident and enforceable. In practice, social and political life is rife with inefficiency and rank partisanship. More important, social groups, or governments are often locked in conflict over real differences of interest and values. The facilitation of conflict resolution in the manner of the partners ignores this factor, aggravated though it is by the radical components of their agenda. Opposition to the mentality of the partners’ forward movement is anathemized. In their view and praxis, consensus building is reserved to those who share and own their own values. In our view, rejecting the opponents causes the consensus building to become lame and in fact divisive. Another consequence of the partners’ intolerance of opposition is the deceiving appearance that the system is unassailable and that it holds a monopoly of virtue by dint of its anti-conflictual methods of advancing social and political change.

The radicality of the present consensus has two parameters. Its scope has been extended horizontally from governments—the founding and sovereign authority of the UN—to civil society and all potential stakeholders that were not governments, particularly those that had been traditionally considered secondary (women, children, indigenous people, and so on). The principle of horizontality was also used to expand the scope of the process of social change. The partners apply the consensus paradigm to the broadest range of problems and situations: the market economy, humanitarian aid, security, health and education—in brief, every phase of social, economic, cultural, civic and political life.

Consensus building also has a vertical dimension: the consensus becomes increasingly normative in a top-down fashion. Not only do its norms apply to all stakeholders, but they demand their full commitment. The partners tell people and groups that changes in their values, ethics, attitudes are needed. And these changes will be achieved through consensus building, not confrontation. The vertical application of consensus to all problems and issues is justified by the inefficiency of confrontation. According to Lash and Buzzelli, respectively president of the World Resources Institute and vice president of the Dow Chemical Company:

The politics of mistrust are the greatest obstacle to the process of innovation and change that we all believe is necessary to achieve the goals we share. We believe that consensus will move America forward both faster and farther than confrontation. Moreover, we believe that consensus is the public's job, not the government's. Government is important in implementing what people agree on, but we all need to do the hard work of listening, learning, and finding common ground. (Lash and Buzzelli 1996, i)

The “people” must make policy.

Solutions reached by consensus are supposedly more sustainable than those reached by traditional means. In the consensus-building process, substantive agreements and the commitment of stakeholders to enact them are obtained together. Each participant gains from the consensus. Consensus agreements thus become *social capital*: a global resource “owned” by stakeholders. *Social capital* is defined as the “features of social organisation, such as networks and values, including tolerance, inclusion, reciprocity, participation and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital inheres in the relations between and among actors” (UNDP 1997). The agreements of the global conferences of the 1990s are thus viewed as global social capital. They are considered gains to build on, generating new progress and worldwide ownership.

Global civil society, which has been redefined in terms of participation in the new consensus agenda, is the fountainhead of social capital. Furthermore, as the UN itself puts it, “civic networks ease the dilemmas of collective action by institutionalizing social interaction, reducing opportunism, fostering trust, and making political and economic transactions easier. Well-developed civic networks also amplify flows of information—the basis for reliable political, economic and social collaboration and public participation of civil society members. These relationships and social norms make up a nation's social capital” (UNDP 1997). At the root of social capital are participation, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, and equity. Conflicts between development and environmental concerns, for instance, become manageable if there is social capital. The synergy that comes from social capital allegedly resolves the conflict between private interests and the common good. Social capital and social trust are indeed real and important concepts of social science. They play a decisive role in the convergence of consensual democracy and individual creativity. This will be shown in the final conclusions. But we must refuse to allow the concept of social capital to be hijacked by the partners' fiat.

Sustainability

Sustainable human development is the overarching concept used to define the new paradigm. As noted in the preceding chapter, the report of the Brundtland commission submitted to the General Assembly in 1987 defined sustainable development as development that seeks “to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future.” This definition operated a shift from development as growth to development as sustainability. Adopted at the 1992 Rio conference, the new paradigm was reaffirmed and enlarged at each subsequent conference. According to the partners, global changes, particularly economic globalization, necessitate the paradigm shift.

The consensual acceptance of sustainable development as a vital component of the new paradigm is not in doubt, but interpretations and focus vary from common sense to radical ecofeminist agendas. Because of the variety of its interpretations and the inherent complexity of the concept, the very existence of a consensus on sustainable development is questionable. Yet all affirm, with greater or lesser understanding of the commitments involved, that the world community is in transition toward sustainable development. Since the Rio conference, the transition has moved from growth to sustainability and people-centeredness, from bigger to better, from quantity to quality. Sustainable development is presented as an alternative approach to one based solely on economic growth. It is defined as a balance between three parameters, namely economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection. Five years after Rio, Secretary-General Annan affirmed in his reform package that

of the challenges facing the world community in the next century, none will be more formidable or pervasive as the attainment of a sustainable equilibrium between economic growth, poverty reduction, social equity and the protection of the Earth’s resources, commons and life-support systems (Annan 1997a).

Although governments have been slow to integrate the new concept into their policies and ministries, sustainable development has been mainstreamed throughout the UN system, including the Bretton Woods institutions. The World Bank has restructured itself to implement the global conferences, including creating a section on sustainable development. Sustainable development became a major horizontal activity for the OECD. The WTO considers it a major challenge of the twenty-first century. All international organizations have been streamlined to integrate the three parameters of sustainable development, although some put greater emphasis on growth, others on equity, and still others on environmental protection.

However, the conceptual and practical integration of the three parameters—integration being the *raison d’être* and originality of the new paradigm—were not self-evident to many. The use of integration by the UN and its partners to stretch or enlarge unduly the UN mandate and to redefine the role and functions of international organizations was another source of uncertainty.

Mr. Annan likes to speak of *equilibrium* rather than of development. The new paradigm is not a recipe for linear or uncontrolled growth and development; the objective is a balanced system. The new framework does not abandon growth, but sustainability has transcended the importance of growth per se: “Economic growth is a means to sustainable human development—not an end in itself”(UNDP 1997). Hence “sustainable economic growth” is growth that is balanced with social and environmental interests. In this context, growth is no longer meant in the traditional market sense.

It is important to understand what this means for the developing world. Most of the partners are Western. Not only did the New Left come to believe in environmental purism but it prompted a radical ideology and objectives in which developing countries had no interest. The latter want development and growth, not the social changes that Western liberals deem so important. The practical contradiction between development (as it is understood and needed in the developing world) and sustainable development (as it is perceived in the paradigm) could be resolved only by changing the paradigm itself: a change already evolving and described in the last chapter.

In the perspective of the new paradigm, sustainability is not perceived statically as the prudent management of scarce resources. Sustainability is a dynamic component of the forward movement. It is driven by two distinct but complementary processes: (1) integration of the economic, social, and environmental parameters, and (2) enlargement of goals, rights, values, and partnerships. Integration is related to the verticality of the consensus, while enlargement is related to its horizontality, to the fact that the paradigm has global scope.

Integration approaches sustainable development as a process of social change. Consequently, accepting social change is a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development. The implicit claim is that, in the absence of social change, development cannot be sustainable. At first, the focus of social change was environmental. It then shifted to people.

Sustainable human development seeks to expand choices for all people—women, men and children, current and future generations—while protecting the natural systems on which all life depends. Moving away from a narrow, economy-centered approach to development, sustainable human development places people at the core, and views humans as both a means and an end of development (UNDP 1998a).

In other words, to put the matter plainly, if poor people do not accept the partners’ view of the environment and of social change, the partners will refuse to change policies to accord with the views and needs of the poor, but instead set out to change their minds and culture.

Incidentally, as the partners see it, people-centeredness is related to choice as a right: “Sustained economic growth, in the context of sustainable development, and social progress require that growth be broadly based, offering equal opportunities to all people”(UNFPA 1998). The emphasis on people-centeredness and environmental protection clearly overshadows economic growth. This is a built-in

contradiction that requires attention. A boomerang effect might develop. Developing countries might take the imposition of concepts and policies contrary to their interests and values as a manifestation of Western—if not American—imperialism.

The relationship between economic development and environmental degradation first reached the international agenda in 1972, at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. In the 1980s the environment was not, however, conceptually included in economic development planning. The Brundtland commission created the concept of sustainable development and explained that it

implies a focus on welfare considerations broader than just economic growth, on equity concerns, and on the need for governments to address threats to global “commons”, such as the environment, natural resources and a cohesive social system. The emphasis is on the links between the key components of sustainability, namely the economic, social and environmental dimensions; on the need to balance these links when there are conflicts; and on ensuring that economic policy takes into account environmental and social policy concerns, and vice versa (OECD 1998).

Before Rio, the 1992 earth summit, the consensus called for a careful integration of the three parameters (economic, social, and environmental). The Rio consensus, called Agenda 21, is the outcome of that integration.

Agenda 21 is characterized as the “unprecedented commitment” of the countries of the world to change their approach to development “to adopt new sustainable processes” (UNDP 1998b). Agenda 21 proposed detailed actions in environmental, social, and economic areas, such as combating poverty, changing patterns of production and consumption, standardizing lifestyles, addressing demographic dynamics, conserving and managing natural resources (atmosphere, oceans, and biodiversity), preventing deforestation, and promoting sustainable agriculture. Since governments “joined” the Agenda 21 consensus, the UN claims they agreed that the integration of environment and development concerns would lead to the fulfillment of basic human needs and better protected ecosystems. The partners further decided that fulfilling people’s basic needs (social equity) was less damaging to the environment (environmental protection) than exponential technological expansion (economic growth). A linkage between environmental protection and the equity principle was thereby established.

The earth summit also resolved that the UN should initiate talks to halt the depletion of certain fish stocks and prevent conflict over fishing on the high seas. Agenda 21 also requested the UN to negotiate an international legal agreement to prevent the degradation of drylands. Beginning in October 1994, member-states were invited to sign the international convention against desertification, which took effect in December 1996.

Three bodies were created to ensure the implementation of the consensus: the Commission on Sustainable Development (in the ECOSOC), the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (in the UN Administrative Committee on Coordination), and the High-Level Advisory Board on Sustainable

Development. To operationalize sustainable development, new parallel structures were conceived, such as the National Councils for Sustainable Development. Since Rio, some seventy countries, including the United States, have created NCSDs. These structures describe themselves as “multi-stakeholder participatory bodies” (NCSD Undated-a). Their first function is conceptual and procedural integration. On the one hand, they are to advance the vertical integration of the economic, social, and environmental parameters in sustainable development and, on the other, the horizontal integration of local, national, and international action. The second function is governance: awareness raising, decision-making, and implementation. The councils’ role is to localize global agreements and to provide for the participation of civil society in UN deliberations. The councils help legislators and executive branches on sustainable development by offering expert advice and becoming instrumental in introducing new legislation and also in globally harmonizing the interpretation of sustainable development. In the United States, the President’s Council on Sustainable Development, which was part of the Executive Office of the President, advised Mr. Clinton from 1993 to 1999 on how to develop new approaches to achieve sustainable development in the United States.

The UN system defines sustainable development in terms of needs, means, risks, and limitations. The notion of needs is all-encompassing. Needs are, of course, people-centered. In the light of the equity principle, needs are more specifically those of the world’s poor, included by the UN in the category of vulnerable groups, along with women, children, the handicapped, and indigenous people. *Vulnerability*, explains the report on the thirty-sixth session of the Commission for Social Development, is defined as a “high probability of exposure to different grades of risks and a reduced capacity for protection from their negative results.” The document identifies three types of vulnerability, corresponding to the three parameters of sustainable development: ecological vulnerability, structural vulnerability, and social vulnerability.

In the perspective of the new paradigm, social roles are culturally determined: they can be deconstructed and reconstructed. Economic vulnerability is said to result from certain aspects of macroeconomics—stemming, for example, from free-market activities that create increasing gaps between rich and poor. Vulnerability calls for prevention, hence the paradigmatic shift from aid to prevention. Preventing is deemed to be more people-centered and less costly than curing—a hijacking of perfectly sensible medical observation to an area totally different in nature. Limitations are imposed by technology, social organization, and the need not to overdraw the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs. In a context of limitation, means are to be justly distributed; access to development is to be made equitable. The conceptual elaboration of sustainable development thus moves from means to needs, from development to equity, and from sustainable development to human development.

Challenging the free market follows. People, not profit, need to be at the center of concerns for sustainable development. They are the central objects of sustainable development, but also its main subjects. People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. Incorporating gender equity and reproductive rights, sustainable development particularly requires the full participation of women. The eradication of poverty and the equity principle are likewise indispensable conditions for achieving the new goals. The objective of human development is a better quality of life for everyone.

Quality of life is the fundamental goal of sustainable development, and as such, it is hard to argue over. The problem, however, is that it is not really clear what it means. It is conceptually vague. The new paradigm inherited the dilemma of utilitarianism, which is the chasm between the pursuit of individual well-being and the common good. The paradigm includes but does not absolutize pleasure, utility, and well-being. *Sustainability* is defined pragmatically as equilibrium or balance between growth, equity, and environmental protection. The U.S. constitutional concept of the pursuit of happiness has vanished from the new paradigm and has been replaced by *balance* and *equilibrium*, which are retreads of Stoic philosophy. The quality of life for all, however, does not mean luxury or wealth for all. It is related to harmony between social and economic development and environmental protection. Quality is the outcome of balancing living in a healthy environment and participation, empowerment, and social justice, a peaceful environment and social equity. Solidarity is a new universal value inherent in quality of life. Quality implies empowerment, capacity building, social equity, inclusion, and participation. In the new perspective, preference and priority go to an egalitarian and social concept of development: quality basic social services, in particular education and health care, for more people rather than traditional growth. These concepts, once again, bear the mark of political idealism. The partners could have surmised that developing countries would not sacrifice growth on the altar of forced equality and environmental purism. They were bound to discover that they did not pose the question of cost and economic feasibility, even in the richest countries.

By contrast, traditional market-oriented values prioritize individual liberty and creative initiative. Empowered people undoubtedly become economically productive, but the new paradigm establishes an order that must be respected: social equity and human rights first, then, as a result, economic growth. It is a point of view that the developing world seeks to disentangle itself from.

Even before the concept of sustainable development came to light, a linkage had been established between environmental protection and population control. It is a dogma of the New Left that population growth is the root cause of environmental degradation. The linkage gave the feminist and population control movement the chance to promote women's rights, gender equity, population control, protection of the environment, and sustainable development all together in one seemingly logical package. Since Cairo, sustainable development and the health culture have been indivisibly integrated. Relating population and environmental goals is one of the core priorities of the partners' agenda.

The consensus that produced the new paradigm is continuously being enlarged. Sustainable development has become even more complex than Agenda 21, mainly because it was progressively broadened to include the gains of the conferences after Rio. In particular, the paradigm of sustainable development has grown to include culture.

In 1991, the General Conference of UNESCO requested its director-general, in cooperation with the UN secretary-general, to establish an independent world commission to integrate "culture" into the concept of sustainable development. UNESCO had long advocated a broader concept in which poverty, for instance, was related to the lack of opportunities to choose. The UNDP had elaborated the concept of human development as "a process of enlarging people's choices." Development could no longer be seen as "a single, uniform, linear

path,” eliminating cultural diversity and experimentation and “dangerously” limiting “humankind’s creative capacities in the face of a treasured past and an unpredictable future.” Sustainable development had “to transcend economics without abandoning it” (WCCD 1996, 7–10). Growth is integrated as an instrument of sustainable development, but not an end in itself. According to the UNESCO commission, the cultural dimension of human life may be more essential to human development than economic growth. As the end of colonialism and the beginning of globalization have challenged the universal Western model, UNESCO deemed necessary a search for the universal values of a global ethic. The commission proposed a permanent global agenda for identifying principles and procedures and serving as a forum to achieve an international consensus. Awareness raising would lead to the creation of new rights, such as the right to peace. Culture became “a central variable” and “an essential determinant, if not the essence itself of sustainable development” (WCCD 1996, 7–10).

The new global values are the fundamental ethical imperatives of sustainable development. They are addressed in environmental ethics and need a “new integrated ethical vision” followed by a commitment by all nations and people to implement the new global values (UNESCO 1996) (chapter five). So “culture,” in this perspective, means protecting people and their cultures from the amalgamating tendencies of global capitalism, but it also means *changing* the way they think about free enterprise, democratic representation, and traditional values.

The logic of integration and enlargement seems evident. The practical meaning of sustainability is found in its operationalization. Yet to operationalize sustainable development is a complex task. The partners do not hide that for most people who have pledged fealty to the new paradigm, sustainable development still refers primarily to environmental protection. The economic, social, and environmental implications of sustainability remain unclear to policymakers. Rumen Gechev, the chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1997, then recognized that

occasionally, sustainable development is equated to environment or limited to “environmentally sound development.” On other occasions sustainable development is equated to “sustained economic growth” while the latter is only one of the main components of the former.

He continued:

It will be essential to reconfirm the concept of sustainable development as it emanated from Rio. Otherwise, a somewhat confusing situation will continue, as if we are trying to achieve both sustainable and unsustainable development at the same time (Gechev 1997).

The dimension of social equity is theoretically integrated in sustainable development, but sustainable development programs and social equity programs seem to run in parallel. Furthermore, developing countries

fear that sustainable development in practice boils down to environmental protection, to the detriment of the social and economic dimensions.

Implementation of Agenda 21 has fallen far short of expectations. Much of the world is moving in a different direction. According to the UN, a majority of nations are worse off today than they were twenty years ago, and the debt burden on the developing world continues to mount, as does the imbalance in consumption between the rich and the poor. What makes the integration of the three parameters so necessary is that, as Maurice Strong put it, “the principal driving forces of economic activity ... are still the major contributors of our current unsustainable course” (Strong 1997). In other words, multinational corporations have not integrated environmental protection and social equity in their policy priorities.

Realizing that many people are still confused about sustainable development, “clarification” has become a principle of action of the UN system and NGOs. Clarification implies establishing a clear vision of goals, openness, self-reliance, participation in consensus building, and indicators to measure progress. But concepts adopted by consensus are, as a rule, clarified *after* the adoption of the consensus and implemented in the name of the consensus without democratic consideration for the substantive changes brought about by the clarification process.

The partners seek to revitalize the sustainable development movement by developing alliances in civil society and by impelling governments and intergovernmental groups to take action. To translate agreements into effective action at local, national, and regional levels, the UN claims to need new and better mechanisms.

Strong noted that a major impediment to progress was that actors continued to work in isolation from each other. The Rio conference identified nine major civil society groups in the implementation of sustainable development (women; children and youth; indigenous people; NGOs; local authorities; workers and trade unions; business and industry; scientific and technological communities; farmers), but NGOs have prevailed over the other groups to the point of claiming to represent civil society. The logic of sustainable development calls for major stakeholders to contribute to the deliberation and negotiation of the agreements and to their implementation. For that reason Agenda 21 required the ECOSOC Commission on Sustainable Development, in charge of the follow-up to Rio, to include representatives of the nine major groups in its deliberations. The commission thus adopted new modalities by including NGOs, claiming to represent most of these groups, on panel discussions.

People-Centeredness

The novelty of sustainable development as a process derives from the shift from growth to people-centeredness. The partners claim that the elements of the UN conceptual framework are “people-centered”: so are sustainable development itself, the rights approach, reproductive health, the equity principle, the gender perspective, education for all, food security, the partnership principle, participation, empowerment, capacity building, and so on.

People-centeredness came about as a reaction against the institutional character of development that had prevailed in former UN development projects. The forward movement seeks to reverse the imposition of

abstract principles of economic theory, arbitrary dogma, centralized or remote policy-making, governmental corruption, top-down decision making, lack of transparency and accountability of the political process, vertically organized health care and educational systems, and inefficient bureaucracies: a sweeping amalgam that throws doubt on the past and discredits all traditional structures. The partners claim that those structures have failed to address the needs and rights of people. The more radical elements of the forward movement view traditional family values, religion, natural law, moral authority, national sovereignty, and the market as impositions that have no place in the new paradigm.

The paradigm is persistently suspicious of free enterprise, which is blamed for destroying the environment, indigenous values, local communities, jobs, cultures, and human rights. People-centeredness replaces the values of the market with people-centered values. The new values are “transparent and accountable governance” (UN WSSD 1995, 3), social participation, partnerships, empowerment, human rights, equity, equality, solidarity, and justice—all values that are supposed to correct the evils of economic globalization. The 1999 UNDP *Human Development Report* thus introduced the concept of globalization with a human face, or people-centered globalization. The UNDP attempts to integrate ethics, equity, inclusion, human security, sustainability, and development in globalization itself.

The people-centered paradigm has been driven by the human rights movement. This movement is best defined as the process whereby people become aware of and claim their rights, guided by a small elite of innovators and facilitators who tell them what their rights are and how they should be claimed and enforced. In point of fact, feminists spearheaded the people-centered revolution. The revolution was also aided by NGOs concerned about issues that governments allegedly had inadequately addressed, including poverty, environmental degradation, and demilitarization. In the first stage of the people-centered process, social development was mainstreamed into development just as growth was relativized. People were “placed at the center,” for

the real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth (UNDP 1999a, 1).¹

The next, decisive, and continuing stage is the prioritizing of social integration as the means to empower people. *Social integration* is described as interactive inclusion. It somehow both requires and results in the participation of all people. The process eventually leads to participatory democracy and the construction of a new culture. The third stage is just emerging now and joins a debate on *identity* (individual, sociological, cultural, and gender) and *diversity*. But the focus on identity could eventually destroy the paradigm in its efforts to impose global norms—unless the partners find a way to hijack the concept. The search for individual identity opens the door to the pursuit of happiness, personal values and traditional truths. Cultural diversity

¹ From HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 1999, copyright 1999 by the United Nations Development Programme. Used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

contradicts the imposition of global paradigms; it reintegrates religions, free enterprise, national cultures. It remains to be seen how the leftist radicals will stamp out the spontaneous sprouting of the seeds of its own destruction.

This becomes clearer if we ask how people-centeredness defines *the people*. Inclusion is the first key coordinate of the definition: *the people* are all people, men and women, the elderly, adults and children, the poor and the wealthy, the people from the South and those from the North, businessmen and NGO practitioners, international organizations and local authorities, villagers and urban dwellers, homosexuals and heterosexuals. With its goal of becoming universally normative, the new paradigm is concerned with everyone. People-centeredness is all inclusive. Social integration becomes its paramount ethical principle. The preamble of the UN Charter justifies the claim: “We, the peoples of the United Nations.”

The people meant by people-centeredness are, however, the people who are global citizens, individuals forming the global collectivity. In practice, they are the NGOs claiming to represent them—and not the peoples, or nations, of the United Nations. So the people are represented, but not by democratically elected and accountable representatives.

The fact that the representatives are not really accountable to anyone allows them to define the people’s aspirations very broadly. The new paradigm insists on policies for all global citizens: health for all, education for all, quality of life for all, all human rights for all, basic social services for all, a society for all ages, social safety nets for all, and so on. *For all* has become an overriding principle. Non-discrimination thus turns into an absolute norm and is integrated in the new social ethics. But who will pay for the provision of all these benefits? The unaccountable never say.

Equality is the second aspect of people-centeredness. Presumably, all people are fundamentally equal and are therefore entitled to the same rights. The new paradigm is egalitarian. The global policies of the new paradigm give priority to the enforcement of the equity principle and are meant to favor the poor and vulnerable. Such a priority implies the choice of universalizing access to basic services over actual material advancement and development.

The partners define *people-centeredness* as “centered on people’s needs and rights.” In the new paradigm, securing human rights has become synonymous with meeting the individual’s basic needs. The old paradigm clearly identified the fundamental needs: food, water, shelter, work, and so on. Those needs are universal and could be approached objectively, for they are material in nature. Now, however, the emphasis has shifted from fundamental needs to individual choice. Choice itself has become the most fundamental need. Human development is now the “enlargement of human choices” (WCCD 1996, 15). In the people-centered paradigm, the right to choose is said to transcend, without eliminating, all other rights.

As the next chapter shows, traditional rights have consequently been enlarged: the right to food, for instance, has become to right to food security. New rights proliferate, as well. The right to choose engenders a set of new rights that are subjective, at times unconnected with one another, and even contradictory. A woman’s right to choose, for example, will contradict a child’s right to life, or children’s rights will contradict

parental rights. People-centeredness thereby puts the universality of human rights into question. In fact, universality itself is redefined: it is the subjective right to choose that tends to be universal and normative.

This is very problematic. A universality that no longer refers to concrete, tangible needs and rights, but to the abstract principle of individual choice deprived of any clear reference point, suggests an anarchic society. It also suggests an absolute moral relativism. Another implication of the right to choose is that choice presupposes empowerment, which thereby becomes a fundamental and complementary component of sustainable development and a right.

The feminists and the promoters of reproductive rights have been particularly active in instituting the right to choose. According to them, sustainable development is expected to enable the individual to make three main choices: to lead a long and healthy life (health); to acquire knowledge and become empowered (knowledge, education, access to information); and to have access to the resources and social services needed for quality of life. Health, empowerment, and quality of life are the new people-centered goals of development. These goals, say the partners' paradigm, can ultimately be achieved through enforcement of the right to choose.

In the feminist context, the right to choose includes the social, economic, and political empowerment of women, their access to relevant education and to decision making, the right to family planning and abortion, and legal reforms leading to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in both public and private life. The right to choose has had a great cultural impact worldwide. The "choice" outlook soon spread to other groups, especially children and youth, particularly in the area of sexual behavior, but also in the broader field of education (getting to choose one's curricula and beliefs, the authority of parents and teachers being challenged by the children's right to choose). When extended to homosexuals, the right to choose became the absolute right to non-discrimination in all forms. That, in turn, has thrown the definition of family on its head. The traditional family was replaced, in many UN documents of the 1990s, by "all forms of family" or "family under all its forms."

According to the new paradigm, people not only need, but are entitled to choose, everything that will allegedly secure them health, empowerment, and quality of life. Each new need engenders a new right, and these new rights, in turn, open new perspectives for development. A crucial link is thus established between new rights and well-being and the progress of society as a whole. For instance, the emphasis on health, empowerment, and quality of life has generated a shift whereby health expectancy has become more important than life expectancy. Health policy has taken on a new orientation. Health has replaced life as a basic human need and right and as a value; empowerment and quality of life have replaced the pursuit of happiness as the objective of life. The secretary-general of UNCTAD, Rubens Ricupero thus was able to ask, "What is the 'pursuit of happiness' if not what we call today the 'right to development'?" (Ricupero 1998).

Furthermore, the paradigm of sustainable development implies an intersectoral approach systematically connecting domains traditionally separated—for instance, health and the environment. All domains now have economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The right to food becomes the right to nutritious food and clean water, an application of the environmental parameter. The social parameter is

employed to emphasize the equality of rights: equal rights to food, for instance, or rights for all. The economic parameter imparts a new dimension to growth and prosperity: quality of life and well-being.

People-centeredness implies that individuals and groups should become aware not only of their possibilities, rights, and choices, but also of their responsibilities as stakeholders in sustainable human development. The primary people-centered responsibility, however, is to *claim one's rights*—once a person has been made aware of them by sensitization campaigns. Empowered women are told that they have the responsibility to claim their reproductive rights. When they become owners of their rights, they allegedly realize their responsibility to participate in the implementation of the global agenda. To say the least, this is an odd definition of civic responsibility. No rights are more individual than sexual rights. The passage from the hedonistic viewpoint to collective responsibility is surprising. It is not, however, a fortuitous slippage or paradoxical shifting from one objective (individual self-realization) to its opposite (the common good). It is dialectical and belongs to the logic of the paradigm.

New individual rights and self-responsibility (individualism) are related to the objectives of a global agenda (collectivism). Population stabilization is a collective issue, as environmental protection is a collective concern. In one stroke, the paradigm amalgamates the two components of the UN agenda that proved to be the least consensual. The radical trend taken by the system on American traditions, free enterprise, family, and religion aborted the organic convergence of individual rights and collective welfare that characterizes the democratic process. The partners determined by sheer fiat that their perception of sexual rights was not only correct but unidimensional, leaving no room for dissent and a truly pluralistic approach. They assumed further that the population control policies implemented by powerful NGOs in the name and under the authority of the UN were right because they were effective in achieving their own objectives.

In the democratic system, global social equity is a collective matter but equal rights are individual. A global democracy is plural, so to speak, and the right to participate is singular. Respect for individual rights is a collective responsibility, and the implementation of the common good is an obligation of all citizens, consenting and responsible citizens, not pleasure-bent cynics or enlightened bureaucrats. In short, the goals of democratic governance are set according to right and implemented democratically. The integration of global responsibility and individual rights operated by the new paradigm does not meet these basic requirements. Global needs and new rights are determined, not by the people themselves, but by the partners' objectives and implemented according to the priorities of their agenda. This is constructivism, pure and simple. This process hijacks democracy and consent works backwards: starting from the objectives of their agenda, the new enlightened despots organize awareness raising campaigns to educate people to their needs and rights. In fact, they acknowledge that social change always implies some kind of imposition. Women in developing countries are allegedly unaware of their own aspirations. Economic, cultural, family and religious taboos block the forward movement and must be overcome. To remain within the script, the partners have to overcome this resistance not by confrontation, but consensus building. Awareness raising thus became a key concept of the new paradigm.

Awareness raising is the process used in implementing the new paradigm and presumes that the vision imparted to people has intrinsic evidence and universal value. In awareness raising, the subject of consensus building becomes aware of what he or she always knew or at least should have known. The main objective of enlightenment through awareness raising is to instill a sense of “ownership” by individuals and by groups of the consensus.

The notion of “ownership” was originally introduced by family planning organizations such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) (referring at first to a woman’s ownership of her body), and it therefore remained intimately connected to a woman’s right to choose, to her reproductive and sexual rights, including the right to abortion. The partners then broadened the scope of ownership and applied the concept to all the components of their agenda, strategy, and vision. The right to choose is thus reduced to the right to choose the agenda, which is, of course, no choice at all. The awareness-raising process supposedly transfers ownership from the partners to the people. When ownership has been transferred, the people assume the task of driving the agenda forward and themselves become partners in the forward movement. So understood, awareness raising banks on people’s unawareness of the process of social engineering to which they are being subjected.

The connection between individualistic and collective goals has been constructed in various ways. In the area of reproductive health, the global agenda and the individual’s goal (well-being) tend to a common outcome; namely, population stabilization. Presumably, the collective and individualist goals can and must be achieved together. The partners argue that the stabilization of world population is possible “while attending to people’s health needs and respecting their rights in reproduction.” The Cairo consensus stipulates that smaller families and population stabilization depend not on control, but on free choice. Cairo allegedly reinforced and legitimated the language of health and rights by validating the concerns of the international women’s movement and of health professionals who had recognized “the needs of people in sexuality and reproduction beyond fertility regulation.” Then the consensus on reproductive rights moved downstream once more by educating people to the new paradigm of reproductive health.

The task has not been easy: “It takes time to turn institutions and thinking around, and even longer to be able to measure the impact of those changes” (WHO 1999a). Several important changes have nonetheless taken place in the implementation of the agenda. The language changed from population control to reproductive health, rights, and quality of care. New partnerships were formed. Neglected groups (women, then adolescents and men) have been targeted. WHO, in particular, made several structural changes to implement Cairo. Reproductive health is now seen as “a crucial part of general health” (WHO/FHE/95.6). It has been integrated into primary health care and thereby became the object of prioritization: basic social services, including primary health care, are the UN’s overarching development priority to eradicate poverty and enhance sustainable development. And within primary health care reproductive health is granted highest priority.

Gender is another major people-centered concept. It is related to, but distinct from, reproductive health in the sense that women’s reproductive rights must be enforced if gender equity is to be attained.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles of men and women and to the rights and responsibilities that come with these roles. The concept of gender differs from sex, which concerns the biological and physical differences between men and women. The practical aim of the partners' gender perspective is to deconstruct the traditional role assigned to women as wives and mothers: indeed, the word *mother* was conspicuously absent from the Beijing document. Gender equality, the partners believe, will result from the deconstruction of traditional gender roles. In their view, gender is a cultural construct that is amenable to change. The most radical elements of the consensus do not even recognize anthropological differences between men and women.

Gender relations are thus represented as contractual. The new paradigm advocates a new gender contract stemming from women's empowerment and their right to choose. In an affirmative way, empowerment entails free access to reproductive information and services and to positions of power in society. Violations of women's rights (equated to gender inequity) must receive the same censure as slavery, torture, racial and ethnic prejudice, and war. The partners advocate educational programs to orient young people toward gender equality.

Since reproductive health entails a gender contract, male partners could hardly be left out and the paradigm addressed the problem of co-opting men as "partners for women's empowerment" (UNFPA 1997b) in all spheres, including reproductive health as a priority. Men should no longer be "bystanders, barriers or adversaries" (Drennan 1998), but partners in ending violence against women, avoiding unintended pregnancies, and promoting "safe motherhood."

Taken as a whole, the elements of the new paradigm amount to a new social contract. The expression "new social contract" was used in a global sense at the Copenhagen social summit in 1995. Then Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, in his foreword to the official edition of the Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action, states that these two documents "together comprise a new social contract at the global level" that is valid for all. Implementing the contract requires "a coalition of all societal actors, working together towards the same objectives" (Boutros-Ghali 1995, v).

The social contract is "new" because it is people-centered and founded on the principles of equality and equity. These are not synonyms as the new paradigm defines them. Equality refers to the horizontal dimension of the social contract: all contractants are equal, and no discrimination between persons and groups is admissible. In the course of the global conferences, equity gradually acquired more weight as a guiding principle of sustainable development as the vertical coordinate of the social contract. The equity principle means that people should have equal rights of access to what they need.

The scope of the equity principle has been enlarged to encompass social equity within countries, North-South equity, gender equity, intergenerational equity, and intragenerational equity. Intergenerational equity applies between people alive today and future generations: "Unsustainable production and consumption by today's society will degrade the ecological, social and economic basis for tomorrow's society, whereas sustainability involves ensuring that future generations will have the means to achieve a quality of life equal or better than today's." Intragenerational equity, conversely, concerns groups of people now living and

implies that “consumption and production in one community should not undermine the ecological, social and economic basis for other communities to maintain or improve their quality of life” (NCSO Undated-b).

Equity as a principle of the new paradigm tends to prevail over equality for other reasons, as well. Radicals say that equality is a Judeo-Christian concept that belongs to monotheistic ethics. Monotheistic ethics, according to Hiroshi Nakajima, former director general of the World Health Organization, will not be “applicable in the future” (Peeters 1996b, 8). Others say that equality is a Marxist concept that is no longer relevant in the post–Cold War context. In cases of Islamic law, the term *equity* is preferred to *equality* (in relation, for instance, to women’s inheritance rights).

To “empower people” is one of the key objectives identified by the Brundtland commission. The fundamental prerequisite of people-centered development, as identified at the Rio conference, is a political system structured on effective citizen participation in decision-making. Agenda 21 called for a participatory approach. Empowerment and participation are twin concepts.

Empowerment also refers to “capacity building.” UNDP in particular has studied capacity-building techniques and distinguishes capacity development and capacity building. *Capacity* corresponds to the ability (skills, knowledge, resources) to perform a function. *Capacity development* is “the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and countries develop their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives”(UNDP 2000d). There is *capacity building* when domestic resources are nonexistent or cannot be mobilized, for instance, because adequate technology or training are lacking.

A shift in emphasis from humanitarian aid to prevention is part of the logic of sustainability, too. As with empowerment, prevention belongs to the new paradigm: sustainability will ultimately be reached through prevention, not only of conflicts, but of disease, malnutrition, illiteracy, poverty, and environmental degradation. Prevention is long-term in that it addresses the root causes of poverty, conflicts, and environmental degradation, namely, inequity (particularly gender inequity), abuse or lack of promotion of human rights, uncontrolled population growth, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, exclusion, lack of social participation, and absence of empowerment.

In the UN reform these root causes have become the new priorities of all UN agencies, funds, programs, and departments. Less visible has been the consequence that UN people-centeredness supersedes family planning with reproductive health and rights; the traditional political process with widespread civil society involvement; moral and religious norms with the exaltation of the rights of the individual; authority with partnerships, empowerment, and horizontal equality; human life and others forms of life with all forms of life; life with health; and government with global governance.

Holism

Holism, together with sustainability and people-centeredness, is a dominant referent of the new paradigm. Words and phrases such as *integrated*, *increasingly interdependent*, *inextricably linked*, *inclusive*, *enlarged*, *broadened*, *multisectoral*, *cross-sectoral*, *cross-cutting*, *multidimensional*, *interdisciplinary*, *interagency*, *comprehensive*, *consensus*, and

intergovernmental coordination pervade the documents of recent international conferences and of UN reform. They all refer to the idea of holism both as a process and as a substantive reality. Yet the term is difficult to grasp, and its implications are widely missed.

Holism applies to the new paradigm the socio-philosophical theory that reality is a whole greater than the sum total of its individual parts. Holism implies both a plurality of components and the existence of a unifying configuration. Through the integration of the parts, a transformation takes place in the relationship the parts have with one another. The whole and the parts dynamically interact, and there is a transfer of values, norms, goals, and principles between them. Holism therefore tends to abolish individual identities and hierarchies: moral, religious, political, institutional, and other forms of authority. The absence of hierarchy installs a horizontal system, a radical equality that logically results in the relativization of values. Equality reappears in the conceptual framework as the transcendent value of holism. Last, the unifying power of the holistic parameter not only integrates the component parts, but makes of the resulting whole a social contract, a new culture, a global movement. Holism thus refers to the dynamic element animating consensus and global governance and making of them a single cultural-governmental system.

The Global New Left sees holism as a means to reconstruct the lost oneness of humanity, allegedly fragmented through the traditional sectoral approach of development, the specialization of the social sciences, the divisive consequences of the Cold War, the North-South dichotomy, the disruptions and distortions caused by new technology and the market, the dominance of the West and of Judeo-Christian values, and the affirmation of national sovereignty and *Realpolitik*. The sectoral approach of the past is now labeled as simplistic, disconnected from reality, and top down. Judeo-Christian values, national sovereignty, *Realpolitik*, and the dominance of the West, of course, are all seen as divisive elements, and economic globalization is the avenue shared by all alike.

The new paradigm thus sees itself as approaching reality in both its complexity and its oneness. It addresses both diversity and interaction within a whole. The forward movement is prolix on the oneness of humanity, the oneness of the Earth and all life forms, the indivisibility of the consensus and of sustainable development. All human rights are said to be interdependent: they are one. Physical, mental, social, and spiritual health is one. Education is integral. UN reform is about the UN speaking with one voice. The partners in global governance are united by one common purpose. Spiritual, new-age trends are founded on the oneness of all reality.

The new holistic paradigm congratulates itself for transcending the values and structures of the traditional past. For example, global governance allegedly transcends democratic government. The right to choose transcends all other human rights. All forms of life taken together transcend human life. Sustainable development transcends economic growth. The new spirituality transcends traditional religions. The new referents transcend former concepts because they are larger, integrated, all-encompassing: indeed, they are holistic.

The new order is founded on a new inclusive vision that must be multicultural, multistakeholder, multifaceted, and in which all the human parts would be absolutely equal, united, and cemented by new

universal norms and a global consensus more authoritative than those of the past. Holistic transcendence takes effect in the paradigm's enlargement process. The paradigm enlarges the scope of development to go beyond mere growth. Global ethics is no longer held back by tradition, and the right to choose restrained by cultural or moral taboos. Enlargement is creative development, "progress," the manifestation of a "forward movement." In the conference process, the consensus of each individual global conference and its diverse components (such as the right to development or reproductive rights) was integrated in the existing framework. The successive integrations progressively enlarged and broadened the paradigm. Integration is the process by which holism has been achieved. Enlargement is the result of integration.

Enlargement allegedly maintains the former sectors and values intact. In fact, the process of holism deconstructs the former paradigm as it constructs a new order. Global governance, for instance, deconstructs national sovereignty and democratic representation. The concept of family under all its forms does not genuinely enlarge the traditional family, but deconstructs it. Gender deconstructs the role of women as wives and mothers. In the logic of the agenda, this deconstruction liberates from oppressive structures, the bondage of conservative standards and the rutted pathway of mental routine and action. In many instances, the holistic process is not enlarging, but reductive. In the new paradigm, by and large the truths that are the living substance of our social contract are fewer in number and scope. Non-discrimination is a valid principle but it has less content than bonding. Universal norms destroy personal identity and cultural identity. Leftist conformism replaces the old taboos.

Integration is the process used to enlarge the values and structures now involved in revolutionary global change. Enlargement is the result of integration. In the new paradigm, the overarching holistic framework is sustainable development. The traditional sectors of development (health, education, food, housing, employment) are now integrated holistically as components of the new whole. In the 1990s, development became sustainable development when the environment and human concerns were integrated in economic growth. Family planning became reproductive health by integrating sexual well-being, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS, and other components. Housing became community building; education was reformed to focus on integral education ("intellectual, physical, social and psychic development"). Health became health security. Health, in fact, had always been holistically approached: in the constitution of WHO, health is defined as a "state of complete physical, mental and social well-being." However, "health" was further enlarged when education, population, and the environment were all integrated into the health paradigm. Since the arrival of Kofi Annan, health also includes a strong human rights component. The right to development was made to include all five categories of rights: civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The rights approach integrates old and new rights; the new global ethics is one of inclusion of all values, Western and non-Western; consensus building includes all viewpoints. Globalization with a human face integrates not only economic but social, technological, cultural, and ethical globalization.

One outcome of holism is that new components and sectors that were traditionally left outside the scope of development—such as human rights, gender, consensus, values, ethics, and even spirituality—are

now included in sustainable development. Each of these sectors evolved in a holistic way. Gender is holistic because it is defined to address the social roles played by men and women, not by ignoring but by going beyond the biological relationship to include empowerment, equality, and equity. Humanitarian aid, security, prevention, peace keeping, and peace building became holistic and integrated in sustainable development. Peace no longer means the absence of conflicts, but “positive peace,” in which participation of all people in society is made possible. Government turns into global governance; national citizenship into global citizenship; education by parents into education by all citizens; United Nations into United Nations and Peoples; traditional family into family into all its forms; religion into spirituality; traditional ethics into consensus.

Integration is the result of mainstreaming the components into the whole, into each other, into the consensus, and into UN programs. To construct a system is the purpose of the holistic process. Systems are *strategic*: global governance is a system constructed by the partners for a strategic purpose. The purpose of the holistic process is to create and consolidate a system of global democratic institutions and world government. Systems are *normative*. The systemic approach makes it impossible to consider one component without considering the other components, and without complying with the logic of the whole. Thus, on the fiftieth anniversary of the UN, member-states declared:

From the global conferences, a consensus has emerged, inter alia, that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework of our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for all people (UNMS 1995).

As the whole affects the parts, as each component determines all others, holistic integration is called *transforming*. Development affects health and education, and, conversely, health and education affect development. Health is integrated in all sectors of development. Health policy expands to all determinants of health outside the formal health sector, including human rights and the environment. Peace building is sustainable when it is rights centered; rights are the determinant of peace. Gender equity is related to sustainable development. Population stabilization is a condition for food security. Illiteracy is more than the inability to read and write: it results from the denial of information pertinent to an understanding by women of how their body functions, how they can prevent diseases and protect themselves. Illiteracy has been enlarged by the new paradigm from inability to read and now relates to a lack of access to information on prevention.

Holistic issues and concepts are necessarily *multisectoral*. Yet by itself, multisectorality is not holism: it merely aligns data from different disciplines, while holism truly integrates them in a whole, into a system. Similarly, holism cannot be reduced to mere interagency cooperation and coordination. The UN system uses the multisectoral approach to abolish the traditional frontiers between health, education, human rights, and the environment. All is one.

Hegel coined the term “phenomenology of fools” to refer to the intellectual tendency to claim that everything is connected to everything else. The capacity to make distinctions is an essential part of actual policy-making. The more holistic the goals are, the more prioritization has to be used in the implementation of programs. This soon appeared in the operationalization of the UN agenda, particularly in the key areas of health and education and, paradoxically, in the relationship between the UN and the developing countries. Priorities make no sense if they cannot be implemented. Priorities are manageable but there is no possibility to set prioritized goals that are not raised up at the expense of other goals.

Feasibility is the gadfly and perhaps the nemesis of the “forward movement.” The priorities of the UN system are not the practical priorities of development but the ideological priorities of its agenda. These are holistic but not real, except in the sense that they really determine UN global policies. Those priorities are reproductive health and rights, gender equity, environment protection (regulation and control), social equity, human rights, and the institutionalization of mechanisms for global governance.

As we have said, holism is systemic and ideological. It claims universality. Universality is no longer related to absolute or hierarchical values or norms, but to the consensus. UNESCO is at work on the formulation of a global ethics based on the new consensus and seeks to ascertain the meaning of universality. Universality does not entail “the imposition of one way of being on all. It may mean inclusive, shared, global, a way of being or a way of seeing. It may mean a consensus on norms and values that accepts the divergent ways of their respective justification. It may mean that elements of culture are, like languages, translatable. It may mean diverse expressions of common needs, ideas or perceptions” (UNESCO DPE 1997). Consensual inclusion aims not at imposing norms, but at establishing a state of equilibrium in sustainable human development: development is universal if it is sustainable; it is sustainable if it is balanced.

The practical meaning of the balance concept is easier to perceive when balance is contrasted with imbalance. Through sustainable development, the new paradigm seeks to correct a series of imbalances between North and South, genders, generations, races, rich and poor. The imbalances are to be corrected by programs. The greatest imbalance involves inequity and concerns people. The removal of imbalances between people illustrates the egalitarianism and horizontality of the holistic paradigm. All persons are now fundamentally considered as equal or sovereign citizens or equal partners: teachers and students; children and parents (children’s rights, education for all); doctors and patients (health for all); NGOs, governments, and international institutions (global governance); local, national, and global levels (decentralization and devolution); the private sector and civil society (governance); the social roles of men and women (gender); human beings and all life forms (new spirituality); new rights and traditional rights (rights approach); civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights (right to development); citizens and decision-makers (global citizenship).

When development is holistic, growth, equity, and environmental protection are properly integrated by definition; there is equality, or balance, between the component parts. Stabilization (the goal of sustainability) is reached when the relative weight of the parts is such that the system is in balance.

The logic of holism calls for the engagement of all “interactive partners” (men, women, lawyers, youth, teachers, policymakers, doctors, and so on). Each partner becomes aware that he or she has multiple roles to play. Women, for instance, wherever they are, are policymakers in their communities, responsible for implementing their rights and becoming empowered to play the social roles of men in the workplace, at home, and in the political and public policy arenas. Health professionals must become politicians. We are all, in our own way, educators, whether we are peers, grass-roots associations, parents, governments, policymakers, students as well as teachers, patients, and doctors.

In other words, when all hierarchies are abolished, equality results, and the system becomes horizontal. The establishment of horizontal, consensual authority is a conscious effort of “overturning domination in all forms” to obtain what American socialists have called “maximal democratic empowerment” (Towghi et al. 1989). In this view, all those subject to authority—whether children, students, patients, women, civil society groups, local authorities—are seen as having been domineered and oppressed by traditional culture. The partners’ proposed remedy to domination was self-organization, empowerment, people-centeredness, human rights, and the green agenda. State sovereignty, the market, religion, dogma, and traditional family values came to be viewed as hierarchical by nature: they must therefore be replaced by equity, human rights, new spiritualities, new values, new forms of family.

The New Left has been traditionally more attracted by various forms of anarchism than by statist socialist theory. The concept of horizontal authority is anarchist more than socialist. This finding cannot surprise. As the new form of authority demands that we see ourselves as interactive, multi-role personalities and we are empowered to fulfill all these new roles, authority is made horizontal by empowerment and yet demands a loss of identity. Horizontal collective authority becomes vertical by imposing conformity to the agenda. Social obligation is sanctioned by collective values. Those values are primarily solidarity, equality, non-discrimination and, paradoxically, tolerance of differences of race, social background, values and religious beliefs. The forward movement proceeds in two opposite directions: empowerment and institutionalization. The latter is all about “governance,” which is perceived as the conceptual and practical synthesis of individual choice and the implementation of a global system. It is to this notion of governance that we now turn.

Governance and Global Governance

Governance is the conceptual link between the agenda and its implementation. In the perspective of the consensus, it appeared logical to conceptually oppose governance to government. Gustave Speth, former UNDP administrator, explained that governments and “politics tend to bring out a self-centered attitude,” whereas the new consensus (governance) represents “the very best in the world today of common thinking and common understanding and common hope.” At the international conferences (a first major exercise in global governance), world leaders assembled “to think about larger issues, the longer term, the way that their country needs other countries and the way that there has to be international collaboration.” But back home, these same political leaders seemed “to be in many cases timid, held back by traditional problems,” for example, the problem “of balancing their budgets, of reducing their deficits, of their own internal unemployment rate”

(Peeters 1996e). If the global conferences are to be implemented, global governance must prevail over national politics and become progressively institutionalized.

Governance, global governance, and good governance are concepts that have been constructed in reaction to top-down decision making and also—and primarily—to short-term and sectoral visions of governments and of business, traditional representative democracy, nationalist attitudes, and state sovereignty claimed by governments as their prerogative.

Governance is meant to be *operational*. Historical experience teaches that ideas come before upheavals. Revolutionary concepts are dynamic and contain the seed of revolutionary objectives. At first, these objectives seem abstract and they are not taken seriously. Unawareness generates complacency and political passivity. Another lesson of history is that no revolution can win the day and maintain itself without a power base. The NGO movement claimed to identify with “civil society” and became the base that supports the quiet revolution. When the UN system identified with the values and the leaders of civil society, the revolution obtained power and soon began to create its own institutions.

Governance is said to be *dynamic*. The partners also say of governance what has been said about the other components of the paradigm: it is new. It reflects a “new way of looking at things” (UNDP 2000c) and replaces the former system (a system said to be hierarchical, or vertical) at the local, national, and global levels with a horizontal system. Governance is meant to be global and to transcend government. It requires attitudinal changes. People must “change the way they do things and interact,” according to G. Shabbir Cheema, director, Capacity Development, Management Development, and Governance Development, Bureau for Policy Development, UNDP (Cheema 1997). Governance implies new values: participation, partnerships, the sense of belonging to a global community, cooperation, solidarity, and equity.

Governance is *normative*. The UN system owes its conceptual framework on governance primarily to the UN Development Program. In *Governance for Sustainable Human Development*, UNDP defines *governance* as “the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels.” The 1999 UNDP *Human Development Report* states that “governance does not mean mere government. It means the framework of rules, institutions and established practices that set limits and give incentives for the behaviour of individuals, organizations and firms,” (UNDP 1999a, 8). According to UNDP, governance has three legs: economic, political, and administrative. Economic governance “includes decision-making processes that affect a country’s economic activities and its relationships with other economies. Economic governance clearly has major implications for equity, poverty and quality of life.” Political governance is “the process of decision-making to formulate policy.” Administrative governance is “the system of policy implementation” (UNDP 1997). In its report *Our Global Neighbourhood*, the Commission on Global Governance describes *governance* as “the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs” (CGG 1995, 2)² through consensus building, interaction, consultation, and participation.

² From *Our Global Neighbourhood: The Report of the Commission on Global Governance* (1995), copyright Commission on Global Governance 1995. Used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

Governance is “the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups can articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations” (UNDP 1997).

Governance must be good governance, of course. UNDP identified the characteristics of good governance: sustainability, responsiveness, participation of all men and women in decision making throughout the process, transparency and a free flow of information, equity (defined in terms of equal access to opportunities and assets), and accountability. Decision makers in government, the private sector, and civil society must be accountable to the public as well as to institutional stakeholders. Consensus-orientation is also important since differing interests must be mediated in the best interest of the whole group. Participatory mechanisms must be “strategic,” be based on long-term societal vision, and reflect an analysis of the full range of opportunities and strengths.

Governance is *participatory*. Participation is the key to good governance. For participation to be effective, individuals and groups must “have an adequate and equal opportunity to place questions on the agenda and to express their preferences about the final outcome during decision-making” (UNDP 1997). Participatory democracy is seen as a new form of representation and meant to replace traditional democratic institutions. Sustainable development itself becomes participatory. People are to actively participate in their own development instead of just benefiting from external assistance. Participation is both a means and an end. As a means, participation helps implement, on a local level, externally introduced programs. As an end, participation is people’s empowerment.

Governance is *political*. It is more than mere good management. Politics is about power relationships. Governance gives power to the partners. It also implies a redistribution of political power between central and local governments, between various actors in society (government, the private sector, and citizens), and, in development assistance, between donor agencies and countries in which they work.

Governance is described as a tripartite structure: the state, the private sector, and civil society. The *state* refers to government at all levels: local, regional, national, intergovernmental (global). UNDP defines *civil society*, in the context of governance, as “individuals and groups, organized or unorganized, who interact in the social, political and economic domains and who are regulated by formal and informal rules and laws. Civil society offers a dynamic, multilayered wealth of perspectives and values, seeking expression in the public sphere” (UNDP 1997). The private sector refers to “the part of the economy not under government control and that functions within the market” in a “mixed economy” (UNDP 1997). The private sector is separate from civil society. The UNDP definition of *civil society* clearly excludes business. This exclusion is a fundamental dogma of the radical Left.

The objective of good governance is to “promote constructive interaction” between state, civil society, and the private sector (UNDP 1997). If the innovators of the quiet revolution succeed and institutionalize their paradigm, the power shifts resulting from governance will profoundly alter the traditional roles of government, civil society, and the market. The theory of governance confines the role of the state to creating a “conducive political and legal environment” (also called an enabling environment) for the implementation of sustainable development. Governments are facilitators. They are to develop the “regulatory framework so that other actors

can play their roles effectively” (UNDP 1997). They are not the primary providers of services and jobs or the main source for development. UNDP advises governments to “address the issues of changing roles and functions head on, and enter into dialogue with those to whom it wants to devolve responsibilities so that there is a mutual acceptance of these roles” (UNDP 2000d). The reduction of the role of governments leads to a decentralization of state power to be closer to the people.

The role assigned to the private sector in governance is to “generate jobs and income” (UNDP 1997). Business as well as governments has received a reductionist mandate. Governance seeks to impose on the market the values and goals of sustainable human development because, left alone, the market cannot realize them.

In contradistinction, the theory of governance formalizes the role of civil society (defined as those who participate in sustainable development, implicitly excluding those who do not participate). Governments are told that they have to consider civil society an existing full partner. The role of civil society in governance is to “protect the rights of all citizens.” In governance, NGOs “provide checks and balances on government power.” Civil society must facilitate “political and social interaction—mobilizing groups to participate in economic, social and political activities” (UNDP 1997). The role of NGOs has shifted from advocacy to effective partnership in human development. Civil society is deemed to be “the well-spring of the social capital—people working together for common purposes—that is essential for good governance. Civil society organizations can fill the vacuum left by the slimmed-down state, and can advocate and monitor reforms that foster sustainable human development.” But NGOs need an “enabling environment . . . a legislative and regulatory framework that guarantees the right of association” (UNDP 1997).

Governance as participatory development requires empowerment of individuals and groups meant to operate in a context of decentralization. Decentralization leads to transfer of both responsibilities and capacities to a multiplicity of partners. It creates a national-to-local movement which the implementation of the consensus transforms into global-to-local governance. Decentralization implies a shift of decision-making authority, generally defined as *deconcentration*, *delegation*, and *devolution*. UNDP uses the term *decentralized governance* to describe the “systemic and harmonious interrelationship resulting from the balancing of power and responsibilities between central governments and other levels of government and non-governmental actors, and the capacity of local bodies to carry out their decentralized responsibilities using participatory mechanisms” (UNDP 2000b).

The paradigm now integrates external assistance development programs. In the past, assistance to development was “donor-driven, input-oriented, expert-led, cost-benefit” (Cheema 1997). The UN system has now made *capacity development* the center piece of its development programs. The new practices promote indigenous control, local knowledge and, wherever possible, local financing and also attention to culture, values, and power relations that influence the behavior of individuals and groups.

Unlike foreign aid in the past, global governance does not primarily concern intergovernmental relationships, but all players and “stakeholders” in the system. According to the Commission on Global Governance, governments, civil society, and the United Nations are the three forces of global governance. In

its 1995 report *Our Global Neighbourhood*, the commission explains why global governance came to be seen as a necessity in the 1990s:

When the UN system was created, the state had few rivals. The world economy was not as closely integrated as it is today. . . . The huge global capital market, which today dwarfs even the largest national capital markets, was not foreseen. The enormous growth in people's concern for human rights, equity, democracy, meeting basic material needs, environment protection, and demilitarization has today produced a multitude of new actors who can contribute to governance . . . All these emerging voices and institutions are increasingly active in advancing various political, economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives that have considerable global impact (CGG 1995, 3–4).

The thesis of global interdependence as a given and accepted fact underlies the various applications of governance. The UN narrative of its various functions is rationalized as follows. First, the emerging global society has common problems, which can be addressed only through common solutions and common values. The partners view the UN as the only global meeting place where governments regularly come together on equal footing to address the world's most pressing problems. There is next the function of moral leadership. As detailed below, global governance rests on the articulation of a collaborative ethos based on the new values of solidarity and equity, also called the ethics of universalism. One of the UN's main roles is normative: the global economy cannot function without a framework of legal norms. All partners of global governance must be educated about their new roles: this is a function assigned to UN agencies, in particular UNDP. Another major role of the UN is global to local coordination—a role again attributed to the UNDP. Finally comes the role of the UN in the operationalization of the consensus. The function of the UN is increasingly becoming one of monitoring the implementation of governmental commitments.

As with other concepts of the new consensus, global governance has not been clearly defined. The major source of confusion is the inability of the UN system to reach a consensus on the status of market organizations and the identification of the partners in global governance. Cyril Ritchie of WOCSOC claims that the three partners in global governance are “the same people who have been global governance partners ever since Machiavelli talked about the prince, the merchant and the citizen: the governments, business and civil society” (Peeters 1999g). But the question of identification is not resolved yet. Are the partners in global governance governments, civil society (including NGOs, business, the media, trade unions, and so on) and the United Nations or are they, as Ritchie claims, governments (including intergovernmental organizations and the United Nations), business, and civil society (defined exclusively as non-profit and nongovernmental organizations)?

These questions are not academic. The first classification includes business in civil society and separates the UN from government. The UN system is thus set aside and given a primacy that makes of the world organization the moral leader of the global world. In the second classification, this moral leadership is attributed in fact to civil society. The “private sector” (business) is pilloried and abused for its alleged dysfunctions and moral failures. If the UN system indeed means to exclude business from civil society, it puts its own ideology and paradigms out on a limb. Would it not be bizarre to extol the participatory principle and

to balk at recognizing the market, which is the principal agent of human cooperation and development as a vital actor of civil society? This inner contradiction is compounded by another. What if the stakeholders of global governance, particularly in developing countries, opt for free enterprise, demand-oriented production, and other market principles and decide that they are more suited to their needs? True empowerment implies creativity and free choice, not conformism to ideological constructs or submissive attitudes towards the self-appointed facilitators of social engineering. Furthermore, real development is the pragmatic end of capacity building. It also is the option that individuals and nations have to choose.

There is indeed much that the UN and the NGO movement have done and could do to promote the people's natural and spontaneous aspirations. But this noble task requires that they cut themselves to size and accept to play, in most situations, a role of subsidiary assistance. Although there is still much uneasiness regarding the role of the market in global governance, it seems legitimate to suppose that realism will prevail over foggy, but radical, idealism. An ideological block has already begun a process of slowly yielding to common sense, bottom-up, under the pressure of economic reality.

It is also unclear how formal or institutional the partners want global governance to become. Gillian Sorensen of the UN Secretariat wants us to

understand that global governance does not mean one world government. But it does mean opening out to many players, many actors. . . . It is in the broader sense opening out the possibilities for citizens to take part in the activity that affects the society as a whole (Peeters 1999g).

This argument, however, is being affected by the practice of UN reform. The accelerating trend is to institutionalize practices earlier considered informal. *UNDP's 1999 Human Development Report* clarifies the current direction of the forward movement and UN reform. UNDP advocates building "a more coherent and more democratic architecture for global governance in the twenty-first century" (UNDP 1999a, 12). The report lists "some of the key institutions of global governance needed for the twenty-first century," namely,

a stronger and more coherent United Nations to provide a forum for global leadership with equity and human concerns; a global central bank and lender of last resort; a World Trade Organization that ensures both free and fair international trade, with a mandate extending to global competition policy with antitrust provisions and a code of conduct for multinational corporations; a world environment agency; a world investment trust with redistributive functions; an international criminal court with a broader mandate for human rights; a broader UN system, including a two-chamber General Assembly to allow for civil society representation (p. 12).

The UNDP is thereby taking a stand in favor of a permanent people's assembly in parallel with the UN (intergovernmental) General Assembly.

One of the most revealing aspect of the UNDP's proposals concerns ECOSOC, which, it believes, should be given "the status of senior decision-making body on economic and social matters as envisaged by its founders" (p. 112). But global decision making on economic and social matters would still lack "coherence and geographical balance" because decision making still resides with other groups such as the World Bank and the IMF (UNDP 1999a, 112). The UNDP reiterates its proposal to establish an economic security council.

What Is Civil Society?

All revolutionary movements commonly claim a radical newness. Although the consensus reached at the 1990s global conferences claims continuity with the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it also characterizes itself as new or postmodern. It offers "new-old words" (Allott 1990, 405) to describe a new vision for the twenty-first century. Preexisting principles and norms are to be transcended—or discarded. Governance is to be reinvented, and new values are needed. Playing continuity against radical newness is the essence of the hijacking process that the Global New Left is directing—and it could stand a debunking.

The present relatively benign state of the post–Cold War world rests on three solid foundations: perennial values, the prevalence of the free market over utopian agendas, and the victory of liberty over totalitarianism. The great economic, cultural, and political changes that shape the present world have taken place spontaneously, independently from UN programs and NGO platforms, and do not find their source anywhere near the "consensus" that the world conferences have supposedly globalized. In other words, the forward movement surfs on forces that it neither owns nor controls. It seeks to appropriate them, and to redirect them, through a form of stealth that relies on feel-good intentions and manipulations of language.

The values of the democratic way of life (representation, human rights, justice, participation, accountability, transparency) are not new: they are the values that have guided the United States since its foundation. But the partners would divorce human rights from its organic political tradition. They would radicalize individualism, shifting it from the sovereign and legitimate constitutionality of the people to the radical sovereignty of the individual. They would isolate the human person from basic human relationships, bonds, and communities. In the new consensus, people are empowered not to become more responsible in a free and participatory society, as they claim, but to implement a collectivist agenda in the name of the mellifluous but vacuous notion of "people-centeredness."

The goods and services sought by individuals and nations in pursuit of liberty, prosperity, and peace are produced by free enterprise, human creativity, and technological innovation. Socialist schemes have failed spectacularly to provide such goods and services, and the political totalitarianism with which they were historically associated has almost completely faded away. A Global New Left, armed with theories and new vocabularies, would have us repeat the discredited record of twentieth century socialism. But we are not Sisyphus, the proud king, condemned forever to roll uphill into Hades weighty and unsubstantial paradigms only to have them roll down again when the time has come to move from utopia to implementation, and the turmoil of debate ends by exhaustion of credibility and hope.

“Civil society” has become a transnational force due to the nature of the values and issues that it addresses. In addition, through telecommunications technologies, global civil society is developing its networks at great speed. Civil society, and not the state, is said to represent the people.

The key role of civil society in governance is the eye of the quiet revolution. Surrounding it is a zone of deceptive calm. Many have allowed themselves to be attracted by its ideological evidence and claim ownership of the new values (people-centredness, participation, human rights, and solidarity). They endorse the new paradigm without discerning its real intentions. Others are quiet and believe that the cultural revolution has no hard substance and will soon blow over. Amid the battle of ideas, normal business activity continues and prospers. Benign neglect appears to them an adequate and pragmatic response. But it is not.

John Foster and Anita Anand, editors of “Whose World is it Anyway? Civil Society, the United Nations and the Multilateral Future,” have spoken of “this most elastic of concepts” and describe civil society as that “slice of collective life that takes place above the individual yet below the state. It is the sphere of economic, cultural and social interaction” of all people and groups “that seek in one way or another to reinforce or alter existing rules, norms, and deeper social structures” (Foster and Anand 1999, 11). This first definition focuses on interactive participation.

A second definition restricts civil society to those who are engaged in progressive social change, work together for the community, protect the rights and aspirations of all citizens, represent the people’s best aspirations, and own the agenda. The focus is participatory democracy. The characteristics of civil society so defined are cooperation for common purposes, disinterest from profit and aggrandizement, toleration of differences, and the absence of coercion.

This second definition implies a categorization that separates government and the economic sector from civil society. Such a separation is not only arbitrary and conceptually wrong, but it destroys the fabric of democratic representation, the core of the social contract, which is essentially a contract definition of society. The exclusion of the state and the market from civil society also contradicts the holistic perspective of the new paradigm—namely, to reconstruct lost wholeness through participation, equality, and synergy.

When antibusiness radicalism claims ownership of the new values and alleges essential opposition between the market and sustainable development, it is targeting a straw man. Already in the 1960s, business organization shifted from Taylorism (scientific organization of labor, the right man for the right job) to people-centered management and co-responsibility, corporate governance, with businesses thereby practicing the values that the partners now pretend to own.

In the triangular configuration of civil society, government, and the private sector, not only is the function of government reduced to creating an enabling environment for the implementation of sustainable development, but also the role of the market in development is reduced to the production of goods and services and the creations of jobs and incomes. Such reductionism hides an ideologically infused attempt to change the nature of the market. In truth, the business enterprise is, together with the family, religion, and the nation-state, a major component of civil society and a basic human community. Human labor, the exchange of goods

and services, and income creation by nature constitute a service. The dogmas that profit is evil and that enterprises exist for the sole purpose of promoting their own interest are Marxist and anarchist shibboleths.

In facing up to the challenge of the Global New Left, we would be wise to avoid three errors. First, we must not endorse the new paradigm without discerning its real intentions. Second, however, we must not reject change as a whole, for change is needed. Third, we must avoid the error known in political theory as “assimilation.”

Undiscerning acceptance of the new paradigm is clearly not an option. The rationale for total rejection boils down to the argument that the quiet revolution has no hard substance, and does not affect national politics and business enterprise. If so, benign neglect might be sensible. But it is not so.

In facing the challenge of the Global New Left, we would be wise to avoid the option of *assimilation*. It lies between rejection and acceptance. When the political balance shifts from left to right, liberals describe the change as a phase of adjustment and consolidation of the gains that they acquired in the phase of revolution. In American history, the conservative Right has often adjusted to change through assimilation. In his *Discorsi*, Machiavelli described the age-long struggle of patricians and plebeians in the early Roman Republic: the commoners kept advancing and were defeated again and again, while the aristocracy kept yielding (as little as possible each time) and tried to rebuild its power base on new principles. Assimilation consists in rebuilding the power base while compromising with the new paradigm. At stake are vital elements of the contract of society that binds the United States together; the values that give meaning to personal aspirations, and also to institutions; the contract of government; the future of public education; and of U.S. international leadership.

The issues that we face are morally and politically vital. We must take a stand.

The New “Rights Culture”

The new global governance paradigm has found its most challenging applications and pursued the most radical of its objectives in the area of human rights. The human rights movement has gained unprecedented momentum since the end of the Cold War. The UN presents the postmodern culture as a “rights culture.” As now interpreted in a holistic perspective, human rights are the way not only to prevent wars and conflicts and to eradicate poverty, but also to preserve the environment, to abolish social and gender inequity, to control the evils of economic globalization, and to realize sustainable development: for the UN, human rights have become a cure-all. However, the hijackers have reinterpreted the core contents of human rights in a radically individualistic and collectivist light—a reinterpretation founded on the new ethic’s “transcendence” of the right to choose, the right to equality and the rights of the environment. In this light, the universal culture of rights means the global imposition of the new Leftist agenda.

The Rights Approach and the Momentum of the 1990s

The revolutionary rights approach bases its legitimacy on describing itself as consonant with the original aims and soul of the UN system. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights stipulates that the recognition of the “inalienable rights of all the members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” The advocates of the current rights approach deny that it breaks with this tradition. They deny that they have created new rights or radically reinterpreted existing rights.

At a conference in Oxford in 1997, the newly appointed Human Rights High Commissioner, Mary Robinson, said that human rights were a way of regaining the “lost purpose” of the UN. Article I of the UN charter indeed states that one of the UN’s fundamental purposes is to “achieve international co-operation in . . . encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without discrimination as to race, sex, language or religion” (Robinson, 1997a). On the fiftieth anniversary of the UN in 1995, member-states declared that human rights were the *main* item on the UN agenda. So, indeed, human rights have been a consistent theme of the UN all through its existence. Since the beginning, the leaders of the UN have seen the promotion of human rights as working in concert with general social and political progress. The true cause of this historical continuum lies in the very nature of human rights, which cannot be altered by ideological fiat. What has changed, however, since the world conferences of the 1990s, is that human rights have become entangled in the radical objectives and processes of a cultural revolution. Individual liberty, the family, the enterprise as a basic human community, the consensual nature of our system of law, the state as genuine commonwealth, and other universal values are the foundation of human rights. There can be no claim of

continuity if the contents of rights and the process of their implementation are changed in a manner that destroys their foundation, even if these rights, do not themselves change.

As the main deliberative body of the UN, the General Assembly deals with human rights issues referred to it by its Third Committee and by ECOSOC. The Commission on Human Rights, an ECOSOC subsidiary body (established already in 1946 when there were only 53 UN member-states), is the main UN policy-making body for human rights. The commission makes recommendations, drafts conventions, and investigates allegations of human rights abuses. The ECOSOC also reviews the commission's reports and resolutions and transmits them to the General Assembly.

The General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and then asked, in a resolution, for one treaty or covenant to make the provisions of the declaration binding on the member-states (a declaration alone is not legally binding). But by the time the drafting of the covenant started in the 1950s, the Cold War had begun and a single treaty to cover all the rights contained in the Universal Declaration was not feasible. In 1966, two covenants were adopted that grouped and separated rights in two categories: the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, these covenants became the International Bill of Rights and entered into force in 1976, three months after the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the thirty-fifth instrument of ratification or accession.

In addition to the Bill of Rights, some eighty treaties and declarations on human rights have been negotiated at the UN since 1948, including those on genocide (1951), refugees (1954), racial discrimination (1969), discrimination against women (1981), torture (1987), the child (1990), and migrant workers (1990).

Once the Bill of Rights and these conventions entered into force, their formal implementation by their treaty monitoring bodies—generally composed of experts appointed by the member-states and serving in their personal capacity—began: the Human Rights Committee (monitoring the implementation of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights); the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights; the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the Committee against Torture; and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. These bodies examine the reports of states that have ratified the conventions, issue concluding observations about those reports, and make recommendations. They may call on governments to respond to allegations of rights violations, adopt decisions on the implementation of human rights, and publish these decisions. The committees are also entitled to consider individual communications telling of rights violations. As we shall see, these conventional monitoring mechanisms now tend to reinterpret or change the core contents of human rights so as to conform to the consensus of the global conferences. In April 2000, the secretary general issued a report compiling the guidelines on the form and content of reports to be submitted by states parties to the different treaty monitoring bodies. These guidelines have been written by the treaty monitoring bodies, with the help of UN agencies and NGOs.

During the Cold War, the UN naturally gave predominance to monitoring civil and political rights. The USSR and other communist regimes had redefined economic and social rights and were using them to fend off Western accusations that they denied to their people civil and political rights. In practice, the UN and

the Western world tended to regard economic, social, and cultural rights as second-generation rights, or soft rights. One of the key components of the post-Cold War rights approach is the “upgrading” and enlargement of economic and social rights.

In addition to the conventional monitoring mechanisms, the UN has set up extra-conventional mechanisms to monitor compliance with human rights instruments, such as special rapporteurs and experts who investigate charges of human rights abuses. The UN also offers technical assistance to countries, for example, to reform national legislation, assist in the drafting of new national laws, train criminal justice personnel, strengthen rights implementation in courts, and provide rights education in school systems. Various UN bodies work in their own capacity to promote human rights: UNICEF (rights of the child); UNHCR (rights of refugees); the Division on the Advancement of Women (DAW) and UNIFEM (women’s rights); ILO (workers’ rights); UNESCO (human rights education, cultural rights, religious rights); UNDP (economic, social and cultural rights, and right to development); and WHO (right to health).

A first international conference on human rights convened in Teheran in 1968. In the “Proclamation of Teheran,” member states reaffirmed their faith in the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration. In 1989, the UN General Assembly called for a global conference on human rights, which took place in Vienna in 1993. The Vienna conference was to review the situation with respect to global human rights and UN activities in the post–Cold War and globalization context, with a special focus on the economic, social, and cultural rights that the UN had neglected to monitor during the Cold War.

Vienna made a “new start,” according to the UN and its NGO partners, in the global reflection on human rights: the Rio conference of 1992 had just then provided the international community with a new framework of international cooperation—sustainable development. Vienna built on Rio in the sense that human rights were interpreted anew in the spirit of sustainable development. In truth, the consensus on sustainable development had created new and revolutionary norms and standards transcending all others. These new norms and standards, in turn, had a decisive impact on human rights by stealth, for this was the means through which human rights were redefined away from the concept of universal human rights vouchsafed in all people by dint of their having a common Creator, and toward the secular Leftist concept of selected environmental, group or individual rights defined by the self-appointed avatars of progressivism. The conference placed special emphasis on the rights of women, children, minorities, indigenous people, and other “vulnerable groups,” hence indirectly favoring group rights over individual rights.

Vienna was also to create a momentum in favor of a “universal culture of human rights.” Then-Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali said that human rights were recognized as “the quintessential values through which we affirm together that we are a single human community” (Boutros-Ghali 1993, 7). UN member-states recognized at Vienna that democracy, development, and human rights were interrelated. The vision of Vienna was “holistic,” as was that of Rio. The legitimacy of the right to development was reaffirmed. The conference finally established partnerships with NGOs that henceforth should be fully accepted as natural human rights advocates, educators, and partners. Vienna enhanced the notion that civil society and the NGO movement were the foundation of a global community of human rights. As usual, in the name of “participatory

democracy,” the UN encouraged the NGO movement as a whole, without distinguishing between mainstream and special interests NGOs that would distort and hijack human rights.

In Vienna the focus shifted from standard setting to improving the implementation of human rights. Following a recommendation at the Vienna conference, the General Assembly in 1993 created the post of the UN high commissioner for human rights (HCHR). The high commissioner carries out the “good offices” function of the secretary-general in the field of human rights and thereby contributes to strengthening the UN Secretariat. The Center for Human Rights, which had been the primary entity of the UN Secretariat in the field of human rights, was placed under the high commissioner’s supervision. The office also provides human rights training to UN staff.

In 1997 Secretary-General Annan appointed Mary Robinson to succeed the first HCHR, José Ayala-Lasso. Her nomination was an indication of the high profile that Annan was seeking for the position, for Robinson had been president of Ireland. Her leadership at the UN has been forceful. She saw her mission as extending far beyond awareness raising, to her “inculcating people with the idea that the purpose of their activities is meant to honor human rights” and being a “catalyst for change” (Peeters 1998c). From the start Robinson said that she would foster linkages between the organization’s human rights officials and the rest of the UN system.

Stressing the cross-cutting nature of human rights, Annan proposed, as an essential component of his reform package, to mainstream human rights throughout the UN system and to “streamline and rationalize” the UN human rights machinery (Annan 1997a). This task belonged to the high commissioner. In Annan’s reorganization of the Secretariat, human rights became omnipresent. Explicit language about human rights is now used at the level of senior UN officials. Each of the four executive committees that Annan created (on peace and security, humanitarian assistance, development, and economic and social affairs, see chapter one) was provided with a human rights officer. Robinson was asked to sit on all four committees. Her participation in their work has been one of her priorities. Robinson also participates in the work of Annan’s Senior Management Group. The input of human rights officers from various parts of the Secretariat into the decision-making process is a completely new factor. The high commissioner now coordinates with the Administrative Committee on Coordination which played such an important role in UN reform. The participation of the high commissioner in the work of the ACC is a novelty in that the high commissioner is not the head of any UN agency, and the committee is normally reserved to heads of UN agencies. The ACC inscribed human rights on its agenda for the first time in 1994. In the spirit of reform, there have also been efforts to streamline the agenda and activities of the Commission on Human Rights (an ECOSOC subsidiary body). Some UN agencies, such as the UNDP, also attempt to cooperate more closely with human rights treaty-monitoring bodies.

Indeed, the Office of the High Commissioner collaborates closely with the UNDP, which, as noted in chapter one, has a coordinating role in UN reform both at headquarters and in the field. The human rights approach is thus being mainstreamed at the country level through the UN Development Assistance

Frameworks (UNDAFs), and it is being incorporated into the new modality of the common country assessments (CCAs).

Thanks to such mainstreaming, most UN agencies now have a human rights focal point; that is to say, a function (or an official in charge of that function) of integrating human rights at every level of the system. The purpose of the focal point is twofold: to educate the staff about the human rights implications of their work, and to ensure that human rights are mainstreamed in all programs.

Each group and agency focuses on human rights according to its specific mandate, however. The UNFPA, because of its determination to gain acceptance of reproductive rights after the Cairo conference, took the lead in mainstreaming human rights in the UN system—an indication that “mainstreaming human rights” in fact meant mainstreaming new and controversial rights such as reproductive and sexual rights. For WHO, the rights approach means strengthening the agency’s legal capacity and effectiveness in promoting and enforcing human rights, especially the right to health. A review conducted in December 1997 to determine the extent to which human rights instruments were used in WHO programs found that about one-third were using human rights language and instruments actively. According to this review, resistance to mainstreaming came from those who did not see the links between human rights and public health and argued that the rights approach could divert resources away from what the organization was supposed to do. Apparently, such resistance was significant. The various parts of the UN system, then, have reacted differently to human rights mainstreaming according to their perception of how it would affect their main mission. But all UN bodies adopted the new rights approach with sustainable development as their common goal.

An explicit rights approach thus became pivotal in sustainable development strategy. Sustainable development remained the general policy framework of global governance, but the focus shifted to recognizing vital linkages between sustainable development and human rights. The UN related human rights to its current practical objectives. Human rights—mostly, in fact, the new rights—were linked to poverty, itself so often related to human rights violations and often considered a denial of human rights itself. The elimination of poverty (hence the implementation of human rights) is the top-priority of UN development programs. Human rights now promote gender equity, another UN priority. The preservation of the environment has crucial human rights dimensions; in fact, doesn’t nature itself have rights? Lastly, good governance and participation are indivisible: there is a right to participation in developing capacity for good governance. The recognition of the interdependence of human rights, sustainable development, and democracy created a new holistic whole. It enlarged the paradigm and consolidated the partners’ forward movement. Streamlining human rights gave the UN a better understanding of what it should be doing. It strengthened the UN Secretariat and the UN’s legal capacity to institutionalize global governance.

The old paradigm concentrated on growth and relegated human rights to specific individual projects. The perspective was sectoral. By contrast, the rights approach that emerged from the global conferences is termed by its proponents to be both holistic and vigorous. Sustainable development is to foster not merely growth, but human development, and human development is meaningful only if it is conceived to realize human rights. Therefore, human rights are now integrated in every sustainable development program.

The end of the Cold War highlighted the indivisibility of the five categories of rights: rights themselves now form a holistic whole. The operationalization of human rights is also itself a holistic process. There now exists a consensus that, in the process of implementing the programs of the conferences, three distinct obligations or commitments have to be recognized and carried out: to identify and respect all human rights; to protect people against their rights being violated; and to fulfill and operationalize human rights (that is, to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, and judicial measures toward the realization of these rights). Mainstreaming human rights at the UN meant that the organization would engage in the “dynamic holistic process” of sustainable development, perceived as creating and sustaining the balance between human rights, sustainable development, and participatory democracy.

To provide direction to the new approach, in 1998 the UNDP produced a policy paper entitled “Integrating Human Rights with Sustainable Human Development.” The UNDP leadership clearly sees the relationship between human rights and sustainable development as circular, not linear: the “achievement of each is linked to the achievement of the other. . . human development promoting human rights and the realization of human rights achieving human development” (UNDP 1998a).

The relationship is further characterized as dialectal. *Dialectal* is a new word that supposedly permits one to identify the difference between rights and development *and* their synthesis—without calling the process *dialectical*. Dialectics implies the *opposition* of thesis and antithesis, and we must not have that.

Both the difference and the complementarity of the human rights approach and the human development approach are described as follows:

The human rights approach focuses on norms and standards, legal instruments, responsibilities and obligations, and the notion of entitlements of the rights-holders, accountability of the duty bearers, and the rule of law and respect for rights. The human development approach focuses on meeting basic needs for all, poverty eradication, investing in human capabilities, equitable economic growth and democratic governance. Combining these two sets of means and instruments will strengthen the process of achieving the human right to development for all (UNDP, OHCHR, and Norway 1998).

It follows that if human development is a human right for all, then human poverty is a denial of these rights. That raises the matter of human “dignity.”

In the new approach, human development and human rights are directly related and mutually reinforcing. The rights approach emphasizes “human dignity, empowerment, participation, equity, non-discrimination, inclusion, rule of law, non-retrogression of rights and achievements, and solidarity” (UNDP, OHCHR, and Norway 1998). Individual and collective aims are mixed. Human dignity is the core concept.

If one takes the common sense understanding of human dignity, it would appear that the individual is the true beneficiary and holder of rights. It is also logical as well as traditional to argue that human rights relates to an individual, whereas sustainable development concerns “long-term survival, generational ability of both the planet as a whole and the human race” (Peeters 1998c; quoting Yach). But the new rights approach

does not operate according to this distinction. Rather, it assumes a natural convergence or consistency of individual and collective rights. It also assumes that humanity or the human community as a whole is meant to enjoy all human rights in universal peace, equity, and development. In operational terms, all human rights for all has become a global mandate for the UN system and for all actors charged with implementing its agenda.

Where does the human rights mandate come from? In common sense terminology, a mandate is an authoritative command instructing the person or group that receives it to perform a well-defined task or service. The term is also used in democratic government and refers to the election of the people's representatives. Representatives state their program and the people express their choice. The mandate of the UN is defined by the Charter and emanates from the member states. In the current rights process, the mandate comes directly from the human community as a whole, the peoples of the United Nations in their collective sovereignty, consensus, civil society—thus, in fact, from the NGO movement. The object of the mandate is ill-defined and so is the constitutional authority commanding the mandate to be executed. There is no election of representatives and no provisions made for the accountability of those who will execute their alleged mandate. As its proponents see it, the strategic objective of the rights mandate is to clarify and to promote values that “make every individual a beneficiary of human dignity” (UNDP, OHCHR, and Norway 1998). Human dignity, in turns, means the enjoyment of those human rights made explicit by the UN system, particularly social and economic rights. The process is circular.

But there must be a holder of each right. The UN paradigm does not clearly determine the identity of the holders of new rights. How could development or health be held as a right in the proper sense of the word? As the paradigm is ideological and collectivist, it is satisfied to attribute the ownership of rights to those who are to benefit from the implementation of rights.

The rights approach attained political clout because the rights movement had identified itself with the various movements representing minority rights, women's rights, children's rights, gay rights, and all other groups that could claim to be objects of discrimination. These groups formed the constituency of NGOs that presently are the leading partners of the UN in the forward movement. The partners have engineered, own, and now implement what is radical and revolutionary in the rights approach. They present the dynamism of the rights movement as a natural and spontaneous manifestation of global change: the evolution of history, they say, has brought about new needs, new challenges, and consequently new rights.

The position of the paradigm concerning group rights is ambivalent in the sense that the partners would like to have it both ways, namely to grant rights to some groups and to deny them to others. Women's rights, children's rights, indigenous rights, the rights of minorities and others considered “oppressed groups” are recognized as group rights and are binding on all stakeholders, although they are not always judicially enforceable. But there are obvious cases, such as labor unions and NGOs, in which group rights are recognized. After all, associations are judicial persons. Denying the identity of associations as judicial persons is, however, considered as an option to use against transnational corporations to deprive them of their rights.

The factor of obligation or responsibility is another key characteristic of any human right. If there is a right, there is a duty bearer, an individual or group obliged to respect and fulfill this right. Here there is no need to distinguish between individuals and groups: all are bound to respect and fulfill human rights. Nor is there any lack of definite identification by the UN system of those who are bound to participate in the implementation of rights programs. Singled out are governments (national and local) and business enterprises.

Next comes the enforceability of the right. According to the UN:

where there is a right, there must be a remedy. Systems of law, be they domestic or international, do include procedures, mechanisms and bodies that are capable of developing the protective elements necessary for the realization of economic and social rights, even when the treaty provisions in question use “non-justiciable” language (UNDP, OHCHR and Norway, 1998).

The problem of enforceability is the Achilles heel of the rights revolution. The most important of the new rights, first and foremost, the right to development, is an example of non-enforceability. In other cases, rights are identified with the radical agenda and goals of the New Left. To compel observance of such rights would be unnatural and undemocratic.

Finally, the recognition and the implementation of rights depends on the internal support that the rights process receives from the community. In the past, an accountable legislative process was deemed essential for the declaration of rights. In other words, to have practical significance rights had to be enshrined in law. And the proper makers of law were assumed to be democratically elected members of constitutionally legitimate legislatures. But this requirement is no longer considered to be a necessary component of human rights. In the new paradigm, human rights are said to be based in the sovereign will of the people and a new social contract. The will of the people, however, does not refer to the will of the majority, as in the democratic process, but to the “normative system of world society,” in other words, to global governance. Rights, said Annan, are no longer optional: respecting them is “not an act of charity, but a binding obligation” for all (ECOSOC 1999b). This obligation, when related to the implementation of the new rights approach, is not benign.

Furthermore, it transcends sovereignty—as the term has been traditionally understood. Indeed, UNDAF now sees an “emerging political acceptance that the respect for human rights goes beyond sovereignty and includes what is known as the ‘right to interference’” (UNDAF 1998). In May 1999, referring to the situation in the Balkans, Annan supported the UN’s right to interference and said that “there is emerging international law that countries cannot hide behind sovereignty and abuse people without expecting the rest of the world to do something about it” (UNF 1999). The application of the transcendence principle is open-ended: it is indefinite and unclear and, at the same time, ideologically maneuverable. It calls for extending the mandate of global governance institutions to protect and promote all human rights. A majority of governments have voluntarily entered conventions on rights and these conventions increasingly tend to be interpreted by their monitoring bodies according to the intergovernmental consensus of the global UN

conferences. Nonstate actors, particularly transnational corporations (see chapter 6) and lending institutions are pressured to become directly involved in the implementation of the new norms.

Finally, the transcendence principle also applies to traditions and cultures. The 1993 Vienna declaration stated that “while the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms” (UN 1993). So applied, the universality of human rights transcends any normative system of obligation, not only state sovereignty, but culture, free enterprise, religious traditions, and democratic representation. Hence the insistence on a rights culture defined as the supportive environment of rights that results from rights education, advocacy, pressure, consensus building, and other means—both formal and informal, immediately effective and long-term—to create and support enforcement mechanisms. Human rights presumably tended to be neutral and dogmatic in the old paradigm. The emphasis was not on interactive commitment to promote and operationalize human rights. A vertical dimension was lacking. Now the values on which rights are built include dynamic participation. The new paradigm requires a change of mentality, with new ways of thinking that lead to new ways of acting. People must be educated to look at issues in terms of rights. If human rights can rarely be imposed, the obligation to implement them is never lacking. The dialectal linkage of ownership of new values and compliance to new rights is resolved by awareness raising, participation, advocacy, and facilitation. At the end of the process lies consensus, a consensus that implies commitment and the obligation of implementation.

Justiciability means “the process whereby the rights established in international human rights fora can be effectively claimed in courts of justice” (UNDP, OHCHR and Norway 1998). The current rights approach is caught in a paradox in which two opposing trends can be identified. Although justiciability is not essential to the existence of a right, the rights movement makes every effort to make human rights justifiable. All rights are supposed to be enforceable. No distinction is made between negative and positive rights. The right to protect against acts that ought not to be done to a person is a negative right. An example is the right that protects an individual from assault or arbitrary arrest. Most political rights are negative rights, even if they refer to a positive object, such as freedom of association or free speech, for it is the violation of that freedom that is specifically sanctioned. By contrast, economic and social rights are generally described as positive rights. So are the rights to development, the right to education, and the new rights. Taken as a whole, the dynamic that has resulted from the world conferences favors the development of positive rights. It implies that negative rights must be accompanied by positive rights, for example, establishing or raising workers’ minimum wages, or emphasizing the duty of states to empower people by education and other means. The relationship between positive and negative rights is dialectal; that is, neither linear nor dialectical, but circular.

Another vertical issue pertaining to justiciability is whether rights declared by multilateral conventions exist in countries where they have not been ratified. The new paradigm leaves no doubt that these conventions create rights. The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which the United States has not ratified, for instance, is presumably binding on Americans and gives them rights. The role of Congress is

merely one of formal declaration and implementation. Congress does not define the essence of a right, but only what is “justiciable” for Americans. But justiciability is not essential to the existence of a human right. Human rights are not created by legislative fiat; they exist even when and where they are denied by totalitarian governments and institutional authority or formally not enforceable. The rights revolution uses this doctrine indiscriminately.

The system tends to respond to constraints by resorting to vacant idealism. In the face of practical problems, it focuses instead on the “mobilization of progressive forces” and social engineering. In the case of economic and social rights, the problem of enforceability is compounded by the fact that the objectives of the most valued of these rights concerning health, food, development, equity, and education for all are long term and are not immediately realizable. A first response of the rights culture on this vital point is to reduce the scope of their implementation and to shift from rhetorical and idealistic goals to progressive realization. They admit that not everything can be accomplished at once or by bureaucratic *diktat*. There is also the factor of capacity. Resources are limited and are often a constraint to be managed and eventually eliminated by capacity building, a slow, painstaking process. The UNDP advises “distinguish[ing] between five kinds of resources: financial, human, natural, technological and informational” (UNDP, OHCHR, and Norway 1998). Each case has constraining limitations, particularly in developing countries, where the implementation of economic and social rights is more urgently needed.

As anyone with eyes can see, the role of the market in providing and developing these resources is paramount. The anti-market stance long taken by the UN system is thus self-defeating. The contribution in research, innovation, and development actually made by the UN system, valuable though it may be, pales in significance next to the contribution of the private sector.

The second way to mitigate the difficulty of implementing economic and social rights is to advocate minimal entitlements and to set minimalist objectives, such as the provision of primary health care and primary education for all, or minimum norms concerning livelihood and the right to food.

Universality, inalienability, and indivisibility are the three traditional characteristics of human rights. The Vienna declaration and subsequent documents dropped inalienability and insisted on indivisibility by adding “interdependence” and “interrelation”: “All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated” (UN 1993). The semantic downgrading of inalienability is not accidental. If rights are inalienable, implicitly they are innate in human nature. But the notion that human rights are natural rights is not part of the new paradigm. Radicals anathematize any reference to natural law. Paul Streeten of Boston University remarked that “Jeremy Bentham, in an attempt to debunk them, called natural rights ‘nonsense on stilts’” (Streeten 1998).

The legitimacy of the new global consensus is largely built on the universality of human rights, yet radicals deny the existence of natural rights and relativize the universally binding character of essential human values. When this is done, rights lose their substance. They have been emptied of the core content that has always justified their universal recognition. The vacuum created by evicting from civil society the family, the nation-state, and the business enterprise—although they are basic human communities—is filled on the one

hand by anarchism and on the other by ideological domineering. Human rights allegedly transcend institutions and every enlargement of rights by enforcing the transcendence principle is seen as a victory for democracy. Judicial subversion of traditions is promoted but court decisions are considered as definitive, unchallengeable gains. Existing rights are reinterpreted and subordinated to the creation of new rights by consensus, judicial enforcement, and pressure. The radical Left had a choice of three strategic options: to drop the claim to universality of human rights, to proclaim the universality of their own agenda, and to change the core content of traditional rights or adjust them to their agenda. They used all three strategies. They denied that human rights were natural. They asserted the universality of the revolutionary process while seeking to preserve the formal or exterior universal structure of human rights. They redefined the contents of fundamental rights to make them conform to their goals.

Rights Dynamic: the Moving Picture

In the past, human rights tended to be static. Now, they are approached as a constantly evolving process. Particularly since the 1990s, they are part of a rights “movement.” They dynamize the forward movement of the new paradigm because they are themselves “in a dynamic.” To grasp the current evolution of human rights, one must “look at the moving picture, not at the photograph” (Peeters 1998c). Rights dynamic uses four processes: integration, enlargement, social engineering and implementation.

In the new approach, human development and human rights are directly and mutually reinforcing. The integration of human rights in sustainable development first results from the impossibility of promoting one without the other. All rights, traditional and new alike, have become indivisible. The integration process, secondly, results from the holistic interdependence of rights. New rights, such as the rights to health and participation, are integrated into the core body of human rights. Integration means, for instance, “weaving women’s rights into the fabric of human rights” (UNFPA 1999). The result of integration is that rights become interactive and mutually reinforcing. They must be implemented together. The Vienna conference stipulates, for example, that “the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis” (UN 1993). The International Planned Parenthood Federation quotes this remark in its Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights: reproductive rights are rights deserving the same treatment as all other rights; their implementation enhances respect of the right to health and, in turn, that of the right to development. The UN Fund for Population Activities

has always stressed the universality of human rights and based its programming on respect for the inherent human rights of individual women and men. The Fund has underscored that all human rights are inextricably bound together and that the full enjoyment of any one human right is contingent upon the realization of all the others (UNFPA 1998).

Once they are integrated, rights are “enlarged.” In the philosophy of the UN system, “securing human rights and meeting individuals’ basic needs constitute the critical first step in addressing global problems” (UNFPA

1998, v). But the rights approach of the new paradigm enlarged the perception of needs, which in turn enlarged that of human rights. New needs engender new rights: the right to a healthy environment, the rights of future generations, the right to housing, the right to pleasure, the right to information, the right to health, the right to participation, the right to peace, the right for homosexuals to adopt children, the right to sight, the right to a tobacco-free environment, and so on. The list is open-ended and expands all the time since no requirement is ever imposed to force any consideration of practicality, enforceability, accountability, or cost. The partners have opened a Pandora box. In addition, human rights are expanded to include the rights of the “earth.”

As new rights were at first mostly group rights assigned to collective entities such as women, children or indigenous people, future generations, ethnic minorities, and groups such as homosexuals, rights assigned to groups necessarily concern special interests and particularist agendas. Other new rights, such as reproductive rights or the right to safe air and water are claimed by individuals, but their ultimate purpose is collective: population stabilization, global social equity, and environmental protection. The enlargement process serves the interests and goals of the agenda.

In most cases, the partners deny that the new rights that they have created are new. They claim that rights already existing in the covenants have merely been wisely and progressively deepened and enriched. The enlargement process is thus part of the consensus. Referring to reproductive rights, for instance, (rights that have been created by a UN agency, WHO, and its partners) the former director general of WHO, Hiroshi Nakajima, claimed to recognize the sovereignty of governments:

We have enlarged these rights. Of course, we need to have a consensus. That is the reason why I have always said that the global consensus must be translated into national cultures, traditions and policies. Unfortunately, we are only a supranational organization. We can establish a norm, a technical and ethical standard. But, with the help of this norm, we must also promote political changes in each country. It is understood that the final decision belongs to each democratic country (Peeters 1995).

The promoters of the new rights claim that these are no more than a rediscovery of the true spirit of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration, and various resolutions of the General Assembly. The Human Rights Committee (HRC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights argue that no new rights and no new legal instruments to enforce them should be *formally* created. The main objective is to strengthen the UN’s legal capacity. First and foremost, the covenants should be universally ratified—which is not yet the case—and they should be properly implemented (the Convention on the Rights of the Child is closest to universal ratification). The UN wants to install a strong regime of international law. Hence at the Millennium Summit, heads of states and governments were urged to sign and ratify those treaties they had not yet joined. Some 84 states signed or lodged instruments of ratification or accession relating to 40 multilateral agreements deposited with the secretary-general during the Millennium Summit in September 2000.

The solution of using existing instruments to enforce new rights, instead of formally creating them, is deemed the most practical. This is done in two ways: the treaty monitoring bodies undertake the task of

enlarging the interpretation of existing conventions to integrate the priorities of the new consensus, and, next, a global harmonization of human rights is obtained through the translation of global norms into national laws and practices (see below).

The global conferences allegedly helped to “spell out social rights,” but they did not create new rights. The “new rights,” such as the right to information, environmental rights, and reproductive rights, are said to be a “natural emanation of the rights that are already envisaged in the two covenants.” But the partners also argue that “in their sovereign collectivity” (Peeters 1998b), the member governments have recognized the new rights as existing in the covenants and their obligation to implement the consensus makes no doubt.

The third and main dynamic process unfolds in the implementation of the rights agenda. In the rights dynamics, implementation and enlargement are closely related. Human rights tend to be enlarged when they are implemented. When people become aware of their rights, they start claiming them. According to the theology of the new rights paradigm, a right is necessarily composed of four elements: ownership, responsibility, enforceability, and community support.

A Cluster of Rights

A cluster of rights constitutes the rights culture. Just as everything is connected to everything else in sustainable development, all rights are putatively connected to all other rights. The result is the same: essential distinctions are not made; abstraction prevails over achievements; limits and common sense are discarded, priorities hard to establish; implementation is soft and even carried out by stealth; the very notion of rights, instead of being the inspiring principle of consensual democracy and global solidarity, becomes a divisive issue passed about in endless debate. The following discussion briefly presents the most important components of the rights culture.

The adoption of the Declaration on the Right to Development by the General Assembly in 1986 was a major outcome of the rights dynamic. The declaration stipulates that “the human person is the central subject of development and should be the participant and beneficiary of the right to development.” The *right to development* is then defined as “an inalienable human right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized.”

The right to development as it is perceived in the UN system reconciles the two categories of rights (civil and political, on the one hand, and economic, social and cultural, on the other). It is meant as the realization of all five groups of rights; yet, clearly, promoting the right to development more directly concerns economic, social, and cultural rights. But how will it be implemented? Although the Declaration on the Right to Development is not a binding document, Mary Robinson’s office believes that the right to development is enforceable under the International Bill of Rights. There are other views. Hans Corell, UN legal counsel, said that it was “not easy to measure a right to development in judiciable terms,” that the right to development “is more of a policy indication” (Peeters 1998d) than an enforceable legal right.

The notion that the human person is the central subject of development is elemental. No democratic society ever denied it. To make of development a human right appears logical to the point of demonizing any form of opposition to the UN system and to the New Left's agenda. The practical impact that the declaration on the right to development will have on real development is uncertain and remote, particularly in developing countries, but the declaration has two certain and immediately effective outcomes. First, it entangles development into the rights revolution and vice versa. With the adoption of the declaration, development as economic growth became development as a human right. With the new right to development, development and human rights could be virtually equated: "Development is a new name for human rights," according to the secretary-general of UNCTAD, Rubens Ricupero (Ricupero 1998), and human rights lead to development.

The second immediate outcome of the declaration of the right to development was to give to the UN and to its agencies not only a renewed sense and unity of purpose but a new mandate. It reconstructs the holistic vision of the Universal Declaration. The right to development includes "such key elements as expanding people's access to basic social services and sustainable livelihoods; balancing the interaction between people, resources and the environment; and equitably reconciling the needs of the present with those of future generations" (UNFPA 1998, v). For UNFPA, the right to development entails responsibilities toward the environment and future generations. The conceptual framework, strategic ideological goals, and operational objectives of the new paradigm are summed up in the right to development.

The right to development, adopted before the Rio conference (but as the Brundtland commission was working on the concept of sustainable development), gradually came to be interpreted as the right to sustainable development. This view became increasingly accepted during the process of the global conferences. The 1993 Vienna conference reaffirmed the right to development and brought out "the international political priority in favour of an integrated approach to human rights" (UNDP 1998a). Integration was part of the strategy to upgrade economic, social, and cultural rights. In 1996 the Commission on Human Rights decided to establish an intergovernmental working group of experts to elaborate a strategy for the implementation and promotion of the right to development.

The vertical integration of sustainable development and human rights into each other became the object of normative studies conducted by UNDP. The studies demonstrate—what were we to expect?—that the two paradigms are "interdependent and mutually reinforcing." The right to development had been formally recognized in 1986, but when it was streamlined and rationalized, sustainable development itself became a right:

Development must be concerned with protecting and rehabilitating environments and must be environmentally sustainable. From a human rights perspective, this would require conserving ecosystems and natural resources for future generations, assessing the environmental and social impacts of development activities, and setting and enforcing standards to govern them, providing environmental education, encouraging free and meaningful participation in these activities (UNDP 1998a).

As we have already noted, the right to development strengthened cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNDP. In both UN bodies, the rights focus is holistic: “The sustainable human development paradigm is a holistic strategy for development that embraces all human rights” (UNDP 1998a). Just as sustainable development is a holistic platform, so is the right to development a holistic right. In the UN system, both sustainable development and the right to development apply horizontally to all countries, whether developing or developed. In the former paradigm, development was for the South only.

The new paradigm pretends to balance people’s participation in the promotion of their own well-being and the equitable distribution of benefits from development. The standards used in the five groups of rights propose a “kind of equilibrium that would exist between parts of society with regard to distribution of wealth, power, coexistence, etc.” (Peeters 1998b; quoting John Pace). A common search for equilibrium between individual well-being and common objectives, between rights and obligations, is to characterize the implementation of the right to development and of sustainable development. Sustainable development demands people’s participation. It is, in a sense, a social contract involving everyone’s participation, according to Robinson’s advisor on the right to development, John Pace. The right to development thus “entails programmatic obligations not only on governments, but also on international organizations and groups.” Sustainable development is “raising the individual’s obligations vis-à-vis society and the environment and making sure that everybody shares the responsibility for maintaining society’s existence on the planet” (Peeters 1998b). Hans Corell compares the balance necessary to attain the right to development to that of property rights: “The interests of an individual in a particular case may have to be balanced against the interests of the group in another” (Peeters 1999d). The strategy is an attempt to resolve through a new global ethic and education reform what cannot be resolved by law.

The new paradigm defines *development* as expanding people’s choices and establishes the right to choose and the right to equality as transcendent rights. The two interrelated rights, which do not formally exist in the covenants, were created mainly in the process of promoting women’s rights. They are the spearheads of the rights revolution.

The right to choose came to the fore when family planning was declared a basic right for individuals. The 1968 Teheran Conference on Human Rights had affirmed the existence of a right to family planning for parents. At the 1974 Bucharest World Population Conference, this right was extended to individuals. The term *parents* was replaced by *couples and individuals* as the “progressive” mentality shifted from a perspective centered on the family to an individualistic interpretation of the right to choose. In Cairo the right to family planning explicitly became the right to reproductive choice, or reproductive rights: family planning suddenly became an outdated concept. Choice was central in the Cairo agenda. It was extended to teenagers and meant the right to overall well-being, including access to reproductive health services and to information. The right to choose became identified with the right to pleasure.

The process also shifted from declaration to implementation. In the end, the right to choose found application wherever there was a possible conflict, particularly in fundamental human communities such as the family, over upholding children's rights against their parents and older generations, women's rights against men and children, minority rights such as the rights of homosexuals against the majority, and so on.

In Cairo the right to choose was linked to the right to health and thereby developed into the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical, mental, and social health. The right to choose now refers to the freest use of individual liberty compatible with public order, personal and social equilibrium. Even the right to pleasure, the most individualistic of the new rights, must integrate social responsibility. In the words of the IPPF Charter on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, the logic of reproductive health implies that "all persons have the right to be free to enjoy and control their sexual and reproductive life, having due regards to the rights of others" (IPPF 1996, 13). Reproductive rights are part of a social contract. They must balance individualistic rights with collectivist goals: sustainable economic growth, population stabilization, the elimination of poverty, environmental protection, and the collective interests of present and future generations.

The dynamics of the right to choose have led to a proliferation of still newer rights and to an always wider reinterpretation of traditional rights. It has expanded vertically to include all other rights: the right to life; the right to liberty and the security of person; the right to equality and freedom from all forms of discrimination; the right to freedom of thought; the right to information and education; the right to choose whether to marry and to found a family and the choice of one's sexual orientation without social interference; the right to decide whether and when to have children; the right to health care and health protection; the right to the benefits of scientific progress; the right to freedom of assembly and political participation; the right to freedom from torture; and so on (see IPPF 1996).

At this point the right to choose is not only related to all other human rights, but applies horizontally to all people and to all areas where human beings make decisions. The right to choose is the latch pin of the new paradigm: it fastens and holds together its various components. The new right rests on what is now called "the innate sovereignty of the individual" (Peeters 1999f). A first implication of the choice paradigm is that the label of traditionalism, hierarchical and cultural taboos, discrimination or oppression can be put on any imposition by law or authoritative direction that do not conform to the individual's choices and the radical logic of the paradigm. The paradigm sets employees against employer, state against corporations, wife against husband, culture against free enterprise. The will and aspirations of the child are said to transcend parental authority, voters' rights transcend electoral laws, and any triumph of individual choice over institutional authority is hailed as a victory for democracy. The confusion and social disorder that could result from a radical application of the right to choose would be compounded by the uncontrollable diversity of individual choices and the anarchy of private interests. The irony is, however, that in reality the reinterpretation of basic human rights, the creation of new rights, and the implementation of the world conferences' consensus are linked by the partners to their own agenda and imposed on the rest of the world in top-down mechanisms of global governance.

Equal rights originally focused on the elimination of all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex and ethnic origin. They primarily concerned sexual and racial harassment and access to employment. The right to equality was then enlarged to include young people and children, who are said to have a right to “integral sexual education and services” (WHO 1999a, 11). The logic of this principle is bound to extend from gender to the whole field of education and to civil society. Legal or social barriers to free choice will come to be considered discriminatory and therefore contrary to the right to equality. The IPPF charter notes, for instance, that “all persons have the right to be free from the restrictive interpretation of religious texts, beliefs, philosophies and customs as tools to curtail freedom of thought on sexual and reproductive health care and other issues” (IPPF 1996, 17).

The right to equality is illustrated by the slogan of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration: “All human rights for all.” In practice the expression *all* human rights was generally interpreted to mean new and old rights. The equating of old and new rights entails equating all the beneficiaries of such rights, whether children, teenagers, women or men. Reproductive rights have contributed to installing a horizontal system in which all are “equal citizens” in the global neighborhood.

As we have seen, many new rights relate to groups defined by the new consensus as disadvantaged or vulnerable. Such a definition implies that the equal rights of these groups have not been respected and therefore their entitlements must be granted as a matter of priority in the name of the equity principle or of sovereign equality. The Vienna declaration underlines the specific rights of vulnerable groups, including women, indigenous people, refugees, children, handicapped people, detainees, while it focuses on women’s rights in a special way due to the pressure exerted by influential NGOs such as CLADEM (Comite de America Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer). Inclusion is also due to the work of UNFPA, an early supporter of women’s rights *as* human rights.

The 1945 charter declares that all human beings are equal, a declaration that the Universal Declaration picked up in its Article I. To achieve their objectives, women’s rights activists have based their strategy on the use of equal rights. The true acceleration of the global women’s rights movement began in 1975, the first international year of women. The Convention against All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted in 1979. After the 1995 Copenhagen social summit, the right to development was related to the individual and sought to promote the enjoyment of all human rights for all, both women and men—an important step forward for the women’s rights movement. Before the Beijing Conference, UNIFEM and the UN Center for Human Rights drafted gender-sensitive guidelines that were to be integrated into the UN human rights activities; these guidelines resulted from a meeting with selected NGOs and UN agencies. The Beijing perspective on gender became an essential feature of an enlarged agenda for women’s rights. The secretary-general appointed a special advisor on gender issues, Rosario Green, to coordinate the mainstreaming of the gender perspective throughout the UN system. Women’s rights are now a priority for OHCHR, which has created the Gender Team for the Human Rights of Women. As the forward movement had anticipated, the generic recognition of women’s rights has led to recognizing the components of women’s

rights such as sexual and reproductive rights. Now women's rights must be interpreted to include reproductive rights in UN programs.

The women's movement has played a central role in the institution of participatory democracy. It is largely responsible for introducing into the framework of global governance the rights approach, the rights culture, and the social equity parameter of sustainable development. This explains why social equity is often reduced to gender equity in UN programs. Other special interest groups emulated the methods used by the feminist movement. The women's rights movement has pioneered many revolutionary advances of the new paradigm.

At Cairo, reproductive health has in practice been integrated in primary health care. Reproductive rights have not entered the language of any binding international instrument, but the partners confer a legal value on these rights just the same. They consider the Cairo platform for action and subsequent global consensus documents as part of international soft, or customary, law. The UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has done pioneering work in convincing governments that investing in reproductive health is "one of the surest ways to secure sustainable development" (UNFPA 1998, vi). The definition of reproductive health in paragraph 7.2 of the Cairo program of action states that reproductive health "implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life." Cairo further specified that the purpose of reproductive health is the "enhancement of life and personal relations, and not merely counseling and care related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases." This definition is so broad that people and governments are still not clear as to what reproductive rights entail. Unsurprisingly, reproductive health has been used as a holistic framework for new claims such as the right to pleasure, the right to abortion, the right to emergency contraception, the right to sexual orientation, and children's right to information and services about sex without parental knowledge or consent. The partners claim that each new right is compatible with the Cairo definition of reproductive health. They further claim, as does IPPF Secretary-General Ingar Brueggemann, that the proliferation of new components causes not confusion but clarification. However, only the partners participate in the clarification process and, in the long run, reproductive rights might be interpreted solely according to the partners' clarification work. The new rights are claimed to be universal and indivisible from traditional rights. They are treated not as new rights, but as ramifications of recognized universal rights. The same pattern of reasoning can be applied to any other new right when it branches out to cover topics that were never imagined to fall under the canopy of human rights.

For the partners, reproductive rights include sexual rights. Yet, like reproductive rights, sexual rights have not formally entered the language of any consensus document. Dr. Hammad, who headed the WHO delegation in Beijing, said that

the issue of wording is not important, because what we managed to get is that all the components of sexual rights are there, and that's what we want: that the components of sexual rights, in all their dimensions, be in the text. We don't want to define them because it leaves room to all the possibilities that you need (Peeters 1995).

Her description illustrates clearly the hijacking process in action.

The General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. By the end of 1995, 185 countries had ratified the convention—an unprecedented number in the field of human rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is governed by four general principles: nondiscrimination (equality of opportunity); the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival, and development (physical, mental, emotional, cognitive, social, and cultural development); and the views of the child. This latter principle means that children should be free to have opinions on all matters affecting them, and their views should be given due weight “in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

In other words, children have the right to participate in their own development. As individuals, they are “sovereign” (sovereignty of the individual principle), but only children who are born have rights. According to UNICEF, children should have a say in decisions affecting them, even political decisions. They should become partners in global governance. As the other human rights conventions, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is now interpreted by the UN in the light of global conferences. This interpretation justifies the importance being given to the reproductive rights of youth, a priority of the Cairo consensus. The UN justifies this priority by the observation that at the start of 2000, almost 20 percent of the world’s population, that is, 1.06 billion, is between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, the largest generation of young people in world history. The rationale is that if we are to reach the UN goal of population stabilization, then young people must enjoy reproductive rights as a matter of global priority.

The right to health can be considered a new right. Strictly speaking, it too does not exist in legally binding instruments. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including ... medical care.” But the right “to a standard of living adequate for health” does not amount to a formal recognition of a right to health. The 1948 WHO constitution also seems to stop short of an explicit right to health. It declares that “the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being.” Again, this declaration does not formally equate with a right to health because the “enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health” is not properly speaking health as WHO defines it, that is, “total well-being.”

WHO is currently attempting to clarify the core content of the right to health. The agency considers health a “prerequisite to the attainment of all other rights” (WHO 1998a). If health is “total well-being,” the right to health would amount to a right to total well-being and would open the door to an endless proliferation of claims and entitlements in the field of health. WHO’s basic paradigm is indeed Health for All (HFA) but it also applies HFA in terms of primary health care (PHC). Despite its holistic nature, the right to health in WHO’s paradigm is reduced to a right to basic health and services.

The 1966 Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights explicitly mentioned both the right to education and the right to food. They are not, therefore, “new rights” properly speaking, but their core contents needed to be clarified—a task pertaining to their monitoring body, the Committee on Economic,

Social, and Cultural Rights. In May 1999, the committee adopted a general comment on the right to adequate food and, in December 1999, another general comment on the normative content of the right to education. General comments are meant to assist state parties in their interpretation and implementation of the provisions of the covenant.

The 1996 food summit sought a better definition of human rights related to food. The right to food is now said to be realized when “every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.” The roots of hunger and malnutrition are not mainly the lack of food, but the lack of access to available food. In the spirit of the new paradigm, the right to food focuses on access, empowerment, and choice. The summit text says that state parties should refrain at all times from food embargoes or similar measures that endanger access to food in other countries, and that food should never be used as an instrument of political or economic pressure.

The “right to education” similarly calls education an empowerment right and “the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities.” Education is recognized as having a “vital role in empowering women, safeguarding children from exploitative and hazardous labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment, and controlling population growth.” Accordingly, state parties are “required to ensure that education conforms to the aims and objectives” in the 1966 covenant and other UN documents, which reflect the global consensus of the 1990s and

also include elements which are not expressly provided for in article 13(1) such as specific references to gender equality and respect for the environment. These new elements are implicit in, and reflect a contemporary interpretation of article 13(1). The Committee obtains support for this point of view from the widespread endorsement that the previously mentioned texts have received from all regions of the world (ECOSOC 1999c).

This comment explicitly turns the new global consensus into hard law.

The right to information is related to the “right to participation.” Both loom important in the people-centered perspective. Information, participation, and development are, of course, indivisible. Awareness raising is the first function of information in development. Information makes “people conscious of the reality of their situation” and makes them “aware that they have the power to change their social realities.” The participatory process “assumes that people are equal, that they have a right to knowledge and culture, and that they can criticize their situation and act on it. It also implies faith in the capacity of all people, including the illiterates, to discuss intelligently about social issues” (Modoux 1998). The problem is that these rights are promoted by social engineers. Owning these rights will mean participating in the implementation of a certain agenda.

The new paradigm hails the practices of indigenous people as exemplary in environmental protection and the promotion of their rights is part of the new paradigm. Efforts to enhance them are fairly recent,

however. A UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations has been meeting since 1982 to promote indigenous rights. The group reviews developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights of indigenous peoples, and monitors the evolution of international standards concerning indigenous rights. Members of this group have drafted a UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, completed in 1993 and submitted to the Commission on Human Rights in 1995. The commission then set up, as a subsidiary organ, an open-ended working group to review the text. The General Assembly proclaimed 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and 1995–2004 as the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The main objective of the decade is to strengthen international cooperation to solve problems faced by indigenous people in the areas of human rights, the environment, development, education, and health.

The task of declaring, interpreting, and enforcing human rights constitutionally belongs to the legislative and juridical institutions of the national states. As the mechanisms of global governance seek to take this vital function away from democratic governance, the constitutional authority vested in the sovereign state and the traditional democratic process in those states that are democracies stand in their way. The logic of the forward movement, however, treats national sovereignty and the checks and balances of democratic government as encumbrances. The partners may believe that their vision of a new form of representation will be the final outcome of the transition from democratic government to global governance, but the time is yet to come to change the UN Charter to give formal legislative and judicial powers to the General Assembly. Nor is it time to institutionalize the changes that are needed if the culture of “all rights for all,” and what they call participatory democracy, are to prevail over the values and the hierarchical structures of the past. To implement the existing international conventions, enlarge human rights, and circumvent the sovereignty of the member states, the UN system uses processes that are not, under present conditions, democratically controlled. Neither are the goals that it pursues, nor the ways it employs to achieve the devolution of power it seeks, visible and accountable. The UN system has created a network of informal relationships between its agencies, NGOs, and national bureaucracies that permits to implement and enlarge the consensus in a way that fosters, not primarily human development and rights, but its own agenda. Notwithstanding the objectives that the United Nations is mandated to achieve, the purpose of those who actually control it is to consolidate the revolutionary gains already achieved and to advance the destruction of the system of rights and the institutions that characterize the democratic way of life. Foremost in the operationalization of this strategy are the treaty monitoring bodies.

The Hard Process: Treaty-Monitoring Bodies

The main international instruments of human rights are the two covenants: on civil and political rights, and on economic, social, and cultural rights. The covenants are monitored, respectively, by the Human Rights Committee and by the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Running parallel, as explained above, is the normative work of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights. The work of the OHCHR centers primarily on the two covenants—because they are all embracing. It also covers the other

rights treaties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UN monitors the implementation of these covenants and conventions through mechanisms known as treaty monitoring bodies.

Every four or five years each state party must file a report on how it is implementing human rights, and the treaty bodies examine it. The treaty bodies have some authority to obtain data from the states and provide them with reporting guidelines and normative working definitions. The guidelines concern the interpretation of rights and the obligations of states' compliance. The working definitions are often established with the assistance of UN specialized bodies (such as WHO in the case of health). The dialogue that takes place between the treaty bodies and the national bureaucracies is informal but wide-ranging. Treaty bodies identify issues, obstacles to progress, and failures; they also define indicators of progress in the implementation of rights. When they have examined the reports, they issue concluding observations and make recommendations that have an informal normative character. Concluding observations serve as a basis for a national debate on how to improve the enforcement of the provisions of each convention—an assumption that takes for granted that governments and majority opinion in every member state are able and willing to exercise their sovereignty over the UN system. Treaty bodies often call for specific remedies, for instance, amending national laws. They exert pressure on states; their role consists in “setting forth what the law should be” (Peeters 1999d; quoting Medina Quivoga). The “concluding observations” issued by treaty monitoring bodies are increasingly supposed to empower NGOs to prod and monitor governments in their implementation of human rights. In practice, NGOs are the primary and most efficient partner of the UN in the enforcement of the global rights approach.

Of all the monitoring bodies, the Human Rights Committee, which monitors civil and political rights, has the most supervisory power and influence. The HRC has adopted several general comments that clarified the contents of the rights of the covenant. The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was ratified by the United States in 1992, whereas the Convention on Economic, Social, and Economic Rights was not. During the Cold War no political will to develop economic, social, and cultural rights existed, and the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR) remained underdeveloped. Communist governments forbade the HRC from making specific recommendations, and the committee's work was limited to general comments. The situation has been reversed in the new political context. In fact, the HRC is “just getting started again” (Peeters 1999d; quoting Quivoga). It is becoming more professional and independent. States now receive more specific concluding observations from the HRC.

Medina Quivoga, chairperson of the HRC, says the committee is promoting those “areas of rights, which until now have been very underdeveloped, to reach. . . the possibility of being supervised by the HRC” (Peeters 1999d), that is, economic, social, and cultural rights, and, more specifically, areas that encompass children, poverty, gender, health, and reproductive health. As these rights are not, properly speaking, civil and political, but rather economic and social, the HRC has been encroaching on the work of the Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. In fact, the HRC has enlarged the definitions of civil and political

rights to integrate some aspects of economic and social rights that are central in the new paradigm. The equity principle, equal rights, the right to health, and other new rights now throw a bright light on the HRC's current interpretation of civil and political rights. On their own authority, HRC experts are reinterpreting civil and political rights and thereby enlarging the mandate of the committee by stealth. They are consolidating the HRC's power itself in the process.

The committee is attempting to "behave more as a court than in the past" (Peeters 1999d; quoting Eckart Klein), although HRC members are frustrated because their recommendations are not binding. The strategic priority of the committee is now to gain moral authority and legitimacy over a wider range of decisions.

Although the HRC has enlarged the scope of civil and political rights, it claims to be working only with the rights contained in the covenant. It only claims to interpret them in the spirit of the global conferences, which allegedly helped clarify the core contents of human rights. Technically, the consensus of the global conferences is not binding on states. Yet the member states are committed to implement them and the moral obligation to execute agreements is supported by global awareness-raising on the binding character of rights. The two elements combined have the making of customary law but they lack democratic visibility. If the HRC treats the official consensus of global conferences as international law, it grants itself the authority and power to translate into hard law a nonbinding consensus.

The UN Secretariat and agencies exceed the limits of their mandates. They pressure treaty bodies to reinterpret legal instruments and provide them normative guidance with which to do so. UN agencies transmits country-specific information to treaty-monitoring bodies, particularly in the area of women's rights. States have been strongly encouraged by the UN Secretariat to withdraw their reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. This is illustrated by the way the HRC has treated the right to life in the spirit of Cairo and Beijing. The HRC has argued that, according to the covenant (articles three and twenty-six), "the right to life has to be enjoyed equally." The HRC then used the argument of equal rights to interpret the right to life according to the consensus: "Government policies that force the undernourished part of the population and women not to have health care for reproductive rights" violate the convention. Reproductive rights, in turn, were interpreted to include the highly controversial right to a safe abortion. In Peru, for example, the HRC states "that to deny an abortion to a woman who has been raped might amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" (a violation of Article VII). Likewise, to "deny the right to a termination to a woman whose life is in serious danger if she carries out the pregnancy" (Peeters 1999d; quoting Medina Quivoga) would violate the covenant (a violation of Article VI). These examples show how civil and political issues are reinterpreted to include aspects of social rights. They also demonstrate that the right to choose has become "transcendent." To sum up, the process of turning rights awareness and consensus into hard law is holistic and combines, in a single configuration, three components: the will to enlarge existing rights, informality in monitoring the implementation of commitments, and normative declarations on the universality of its own views and achievements.

The spirit of the rights culture provides treaty monitoring bodies with a new vision streamlining the interpretation of the conventions. Potential duplication of work, lack of resources, and unsustainable methods of work in the various bodies concerned with the implementation of the rights conventions are used as arguments to increase intercommittee coordination, not only to eliminate overlap, but to facilitate the implementation of the new rights approach. Coordination would integrate human rights, which is the way to realize the right to development as a holistic right. At this point, intercommittee coordination and strengthening the HRC appear to be mutually reinforcing goals.

The logic of holistic coordination leads to the idea of a global human rights court. Some committee members reason that such a court would facilitate global harmonization of the interpretation of human rights, ensure their enforcement, and reduce the burden on states to report to several committees. Others would consolidate the HRC juridically. Some envisage a combination of both options. Strengthening the human rights capacity of the nascent International Criminal Court has also been proposed. Other committee members believe that all major human rights conventions will be codified eventually into one—which could then be the opportunity for the partners to codify the new rights into a convention.

The idea of a human rights court is old—older even than the idea of an International Criminal Court—but it has not yet been taken seriously. One HRC expert, in favor of creating a court and consolidating the Human Rights Committee, argues that creating a human rights court will eventually become a necessity. States presently comply with only about one-third of HRC recommendations. An established court could handle various judicial issues—such as individual communications and complaints—in several chambers. Monitoring state reports “should be given to a consolidated committee, which would deal with all aspects, not only civil and political rights” (Peeters 1999d; quoting Eckart Klein). Such a structure would then entail a complete reorganization of the reporting and monitoring systems. As these ideas informally circulate at the annual meetings of the chairpersons of the various committees, they still encounter resistance.

Quivoga, for example, has explained that “in order for human beings to enjoy human rights, human rights have to be incorporated at the national level.” Domestic remedies must be exhausted before appealing to an international court. The UN’s main task would be “to train people, to disseminate knowledge about human rights, not only to governments but to the people.” A human rights court “would only be for the most serious cases” (Peeters 1999d). And she anticipates that member-states would not warmly accept such a court. Indeed, the decision to create an international court of human rights ultimately depends on states and not on experts. Hans Corell, too, affirms that the optimal solution for the protection of human rights worldwide is to have a monitoring organ with universal jurisdiction. This can only be achieved if the control mechanism is global. A Court with such a jurisdiction is hardly feasible, at least not at present. Corell believes, however, that the case law of the European Human Rights Court “is already setting an example for human rights monitoring; its precedents do influence the way in which human rights obligations are understood around the world” (Corell 1998, 45). The vehicle of that influence, in large part, is the NGO community.

NGOs have played a dual role in human rights. First, they arrogate to themselves the function of informing treaty-monitoring bodies of human rights violations. As states report on the implementation of

human rights only every four or five years, NGOs have the important function of providing treaty-monitoring bodies with ongoing information. NGOs (especially women's rights NGOs) have developed the practice of providing "shadow reports" on particular countries. The NGO reports are submitted to the committees before state reports are discussed. Shadow reports tend to treat the new consensus as hard law: for example, they denounce violations of women's reproductive rights, which are not formally recognized as rights. Committee experts consider NGO reports as background that helps them ask pertinent questions of state representatives. The shift on women's rights of the Human Rights Committee is attributed to information supplied by Equality Now, which is an international women's rights activist organization. The findings of NGOs are taken into consideration and are integrated into the concluding observations of treaty-monitoring bodies, although this process is informal. Greater formal NGO participation in the UN judicial work is not likely, but their informal influence, under present conditions, will continue to grow until the undemocratic characteristics of the UN rights implementation mechanisms are better perceived and checked by national governments.

The second role of NGOs is monitoring the implementation of committee recommendations at the national level. The non-binding character of the recommendations encourages and legitimizes the role of NGOs as regional and national watchdogs. NGOs use the committees' concluding observations to exert pressure on their governments. Corell sees the work of NGOs "as most important at the national level." NGOs criticize governments if they do not implement treaties. "This is how it should work. The best way to ascertain that a country lives up to its undertakings is within the country itself with the participation of NGOs ... governments need some prodding sometimes" (Peeters 1999d).

As we have pointed out, the movement of human rights NGOs gained decisive momentum at the Vienna conference. Many regional and national NGOs came forward at the regional preparatory meetings. The Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) believes that NGOs contributed to the success of the conference in that "they were by far in the best position to know the realities that they lived with" (Peeters 1998b; quoting John Pace). In human rights as in other domains, NGOs are generally treated by the UN as experts. The OHCHR is now expanding its network of NGOs on the ground in the recognition that human rights need a broad constituency.

In a statement before the Human Rights Commission in April 1999, Mary Robinson said that

there is a growing sense of appreciation in different regions of the world about the benefits to be derived from partnership and cooperation in the promotion and protection of human rights. There is, therefore, all the more reason to be encouraged by the increasing participation in the Commission of representatives of national human rights institutions alongside representatives of non-governmental organizations and of governments (Robinson, 1999c).

This, she argues, "gives to the Commission a quality that perhaps no other United Nations organ has." Robinson endorses the fact that "the Commission is increasingly taking on the characteristics of a global

assembly of governments, national institutions and non-governmental organizations” (Robinson 1999c). This model of global governance is precisely what NGOs are trying to achieve at the General Assembly.

The UNDP considers the current requirement of government approval to work with NGOs and other organizations of civil society as a severe constraint on its work in human rights at the country level, particularly in countries “where human rights abuses are serious or where authoritarian governments are intolerant of participation” (UNDP 1998a). At the heart of this issue is the relationship between governments and NGOs. If governments are prudent in devolving leadership to NGOs, the latter are impatient with the formers’ prerogatives and democratic checks and balances. The UN system insists more on the member states’ commitments, obligations, and responsibilities in promoting human rights than on their rights. Governments have to implement the consensus, adjust national legislation, report on the fulfillment of their international commitments to experts without a mandate. The UN system does the reverse for the NGOs. It insists on their rights, not on their obligations toward the national state where they operate.

In December 1998 the General Assembly issued a declaration on “the right of individuals, groups and organs of society to promote and protect universally human rights and fundamental freedoms.” The declaration is ambivalent. It reminds all members of the international community that the state has the prime responsibility to protect, promote, and implement all human rights. Domestic law consistent with the UN charter and other international obligations of the state in human rights is said to be the juridical framework within which human rights are to be implemented and enjoyed.

Next in the declaration comes the NGOs’ bill of rights. To promote human rights, everyone has the right “to form, join and participate in non-governmental organizations, associations or groups.” This supposedly guarantees the right of all individuals and associations to “know, seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights.” The declaration encourages the creation of new rights: “Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to develop and discuss new human rights ideas and principles and to advocate their acceptance” (General Assembly 1999a). The UN document also guarantees NGOs’ right to participation in government and to redress rights violations, along with access to the periodic reports and other information submitted to the monitoring bodies by member-states.

The declaration highlights the role of NGOs in awareness raising through education, training, and research to strengthen “understanding, tolerance, peace and friendly relations among nations and among all racial and religious groups.” Only allowed are

such limitations as are in accordance with applicable international obligations and are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

The document also points out that “everyone has duties towards and within the community, in which alone the free and full development of his or her personality is possible.” The declaration stresses that

“individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play and a responsibility in safeguarding democracy, promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and contributing to the promotion and advancement of democratic societies, institutions and processes.” The same applies to the establishment of “a social and international order” to realize the goals of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments.

NGOs, International Law, and the People’s Treaties

At the global NGO forum held in Rio in 1992 in parallel with the intergovernmental conference, NGOs produced a document called *Alternative Treaty-Making*. The document resulted in forty-six “treaties” drafted by NGOs (also called people’s or citizens’ treaties) on environmental and development issues. Of these the best known is the Earth Charter.

People’s treaties have been proliferating since Rio. They are drafted by civil society networks or individuals who are often informally but closely connected to sections of the UN Secretariat. The consultation process is “broad-based” and is presented as more democratic than traditional treaty making where the “people” are not consulted. A campaign is then organized, mostly over the Internet, to gain grass-roots support for the treaty so that eventually these treaties could be presented for recognition or ratification by UN member-states at the General Assembly.

Most of these treaties share a common vision and agenda, which comes down to enforcing and enlarging the consensus of global conferences. They stand strongly in favor of strengthening the UN system. They advocate local democracy and decentralization, on the one hand, and global participatory democracy on the other. The national level is, as usual, bypassed. These treaties interpret the mandate of the UN to ensure world security, to include environmental security. This mandate, which is absent from the UN Charter, was allegedly given the UN at the 1972 Stockholm conference and confirmed in Rio. People’s treaties consider good governance essential to the promotion and implementation of human rights. The idea and values of global citizenship underlie all these treaties, which present civil society as the only true owner of the values needed for our times. To be enacted, these values must turn into rights and then be codified into international law. The strategy has been to first enter these values into soft law (the global consensus), and second to help the UN establish a strong regime of hard international law on the foundation of the same values.

The people’s treaties reveal the real agenda of NGO networks. In this exercise NGOs have no interest in compromising with either government or business: they go for the whole agenda. As we have referenced many times, their agenda is allegedly holistic, even including a “spiritual” dimension. The people’s treaties, then, could do what treaty-monitoring bodies cannot; they would formally create new rights, use new language, seek new covenants.

While at this stage these treaties are unlikely to reach the General Assembly or to be ratified by UN member-states, they give form to a trend that substantially influences the thinking of international policymakers. This effort is creating an important grass-roots movement, and it is enhancing the political role of global civil society, which now seeks to grant itself a legislative role. These developments are related to the

efforts to create a permanent NGO assembly or a UN bicameral assembly. The promoters of the movement contend that people's charters are "contributing to the moral discourse" and a long-term effort to obtain global consensus on "the ideas that are necessary for our troubled world," according to Martha Schweitz, member of the WOCSOC steering committee. This "soft" world is the "seed-bed for a lot of the treaties that eventually do get ratified. The problem is that even when treaties do get ratified, the level of compliance with them remains a very serious problem. I think we need to push all of these: the documents that only look like statements of aspirations, the treaty making process, the compliance step" (Peeters 1999h).

The people's treaties avidly promote all the new rights. They exclude business from civil society. Some do advocate partnership between business and the UN, but the WTO, NAFTA, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the Multilateral Agreement on Investment are all viewed as threats to the evolving UN system. This is because, in their view, quality of life should replace mere material economic growth as a global goal. Environmental protection is an essential component of world security. Development and conservation must be balanced. Governments are called upon to ratify all existing treaties (to create a strong regime of international law) and to implement the commitments they have made at global conferences. Global citizenship is assumed. Participatory democracy is the goal. As global citizens, we must fundamentally change our values, institutions, and lifestyles. Humanity is seen as part of a greater whole, the Earth. An ethical vision underlies these treaties, as does a frankly alarmist attitude.

The Earth Charter is supposed to be the equivalent for sustainable development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for human rights. The charter resulted from a campaign primarily engaging environmental and feminist NGOs as well as spiritual and religious groups such as the Baha'i International Community. In 1982 the UN General Assembly adopted a world charter for nature. This was the beginning of an attempt to codify into law the growing concern for environmental protection. In its 1987 report (*Our Common Future*), the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), or the Brundtland commission, called for a new charter to "consolidate and extend relevant legal principles, creating new norms. . . needed to maintain livelihoods and life on our shared planet." The charter was to "guide state behaviour in the transition to sustainable development." The Brundtland commission also recommended that the new charter "be subsequently expanded into a Convention, setting out the sovereign rights and reciprocal responsibilities of all states on environmental protection and sustainable development." [See the Earth Charter website at www.earthcharter.org.]

Efforts to create an Earth Charter were formally discussed at the 1992 Rio conference. The Commission on Environmental Law of the World Conservation Union (IUCN)—which is not a UN body—drafted the convention proposed in the Brundtland report. The IUCN draft of the International Covenant on Environment and Development presents an integrated legal framework on sustainable development law. In 1993 the Earth Council, in collaboration with Green Cross International (whose president is Mikhail Gorbachev), decided to begin the process of articulating an earth charter that would become universally accepted. The process is supposed to complement the IUCN draft covenant, "particularly by highlighting its fundamental ethical foundations." The IUCN draft was presented at the United Nations in 1995, but official

negotiations on it have not yet taken place. Many environmentalists believe that the treaty is “urgently needed to clarify, synthesize, and further develop international sustainable development law.”

The Earth Charter is an “inspirational document” that spells out “the most fundamental principles of an integrated ethical vision for our common future.” These principles allegedly “have enduring significance for people of all races, cultures, and religions, clarifying humanity’s shared values and developing a new global ethic for a sustainable way of life.” The Earth Charter wholly conforms to the new paradigm: it is inclusive, holistic, and sustainable. The charter, however, departs from the new paradigm by enlarging people-centeredness (the “bottom-up” approach) to all forms of life and to future generations. According to the drafters of the charter, the Rio declaration was “too anthropocentric” and represented “a step back from the more balanced approach of the World Charter for Nature.” In other words, Rio failed to affirm the “intrinsic value of all life forms”:

Unless human beings adopt an attitude of respect for Earth and come to appreciate the intrinsic value of all life, it is unlikely that they will make the radical changes in behavior required to achieve protection of the environment and a sustainable civilization.

The Earth Charter creates rights for the earth. It “integrates and balances” development and conservation (two verbs characteristic of the Global New Left hijacking process). The promoters of the Earth Charter are individuals (such as Maurice Strong) and NGOs (such as the Earth Council and the Humane Society of America) that are unofficially but closely connected to sections of the UN Secretariat.

The phases of the Earth Charter process are typical of what is called participatory democracy. The first phase was the drafting, allegedly based on an open consultation process. In reality, however, only the partner NGOs and interested parties were consulted in the drafting process. The first phase allowed the partners to compile principles of sustainable development from different international efforts and instruments, and to summarize them in a document entitled “Summary and Survey: Principles of Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Development.” During the second phase, the consultation process was extended globally, ending in October 1999. International civil society associations, indigenous peoples, religious groups, and others at the Rio+5 Forum formed a so-called representative Earth Charter Commission, which met during the forum. It reviewed the results of the initial consultation process and proposed a benchmark draft of the earth charter with eighteen principles. That draft bases its authority on the consensus about its principles already contained in government and civil society documents. The final draft of the Earth Charter was approved “by consensus” in Paris in March 2000. Steven Rockefeller led the drafting committee. The agenda for the next couple of years is to disseminate the document worldwide and implement educational programs at all levels in schools and in civil society and business. Governments, both national and local, will be pressured to adopt the principles of the Charter. The goal is to have the UN endorse the document in 2002 at the Rio plus 10 special session of the General Assembly.

The Baha'i International Community, the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, the Earth Council, Gaia, Global Education Associates, Green Cross International, Indigenous People's Consultative Group, International Foundation for the Survival of Humanity, Women and Environment Development Organization, and Soka Gakkai count among the main groups in the earth charter process. Promoters of the charter hope that the values of the earth charter will be adopted by individuals, businesses, governments, transnational institutions, and professional organizations; will be part of formal and informal education taught by religious and spiritual groups; and will be discussed in popular media. The ultimate aim is for the charter to form the basis of a covenant on sustainable development adopted by UN member-states.

The Earth Charter, in effect, deifies the earth. The charter is imbued with a combination of implicit pantheism and political radicalism. The earth and future generations are said to have rights. In particular, we all have a right, "without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being." All forms of life, including both humanity and the biosphere, are said to have both a common source and a common destiny. Thus the charter implicitly creates a new religiosity that "requires a change of heart and mind." Earth is our home. The earth has an absolute value. Protection of the earth is a "sacred trust." Humanity and other forms of life are put on the same level: "Every form of life have [sic] value regardless of its worth to human beings."

The new paradigm's positive concept of well-being (the goal of sustainable development) is asserted and extended to the biosphere, but the charter is fundamentally alarmist and pessimistic. Humanity stands at a "critical moment" and must choose between a "global partnership to care for Earth and one another" or global destruction will ensue. We must "decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community." *Peace* is defined according to the New Age perspective as the "wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part."

A consensus on sustainable development among religions, ethnic groups, and all people will engender a radical "racial, religious, ethnic and socioeconomic equality." Wealth and the benefits of development will then be shared equitably. To eradicate poverty is an ecological imperative, for poverty allegedly pollutes the earth. The Earth Charter paradigm diverges from people-centeredness. Patterns of consumption, production, and human reproduction are all put on the same plane—they must all be regulated to "safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being." The hierarchy between human beings and nature is implicitly denied. Universal access to health care must foster reproductive health and "responsible reproduction." [See the Earth Charter website at www.earthcharter.org.]

Another "people's treaty" is the Citizens' Public Trust Treaty. The drafters of this treaty are "we, the citizens of the world." Global citizens are calling on governments to implement both existing and new international obligations and expectations "to ensure the realization of the global Public Trust," "to ensure the rights of present and future generations to genuine peace, social justice and ecological integrity." The treaty defines civil society as "those elements of society whose goals are to guarantee human rights, foster justice, protect and conserve the environment, prevent war and conflict, and provide for socially equitable and

environmentally sound employment.” One of the objectives of the treaty is to counteract the process of corporate globalization and demands that governments “stop devolving their power to corporations and discharge the obligations, act on the commitments and fulfill the expectations undertaken under United Nations documents and through national and regional agreements.” The treaty is to provide a “framework of international law within which local democracy can flourish.” This is termed true participatory democracy.

Corporations that are “violating human rights, denying social justice, causing unremediated environmental degradation” should have their charter or license revoked. Corporate juridical personality should be abolished, too. Citizens should have the right to sue corporate owners and officers in criminal and civil courts for human and earth rights violations. To this effect, an international court of compliance should be created. The dogma that economic growth brings well-being “should be rejected.”

The treaty clarifies the distinctions between obligations, commitments, and expectations. States have obligations under the UN charter, for example, to “guarantee respect for human rights as set out in the International Bill of Rights,” full employment, and nondiscrimination on various grounds, including “gender, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, or form of family.” General Assembly resolutions and declarations have created certain expectations. The best example is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or, more recently, the principle of intergenerational equity stipulating the ecological rights of future generations. Last, commitments relate to Agenda 21 and other consensus documents—for example, the commitment to “prevent activities on the land of indigenous peoples that would harm the environment or be culturally inappropriate,” or “to eliminate the production of weapons of mass destruction” (Citizens Public Trust Treaty 1999).

The Charter for Global Democracy is yet another example of people’s treaties. It was drawn up by the Westminster UN Association and is based on the report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*. The charter is addressed to the representatives of the millennium assembly, that is, to “all the governments and peoples of the world they represent.” The charter is “a demand for global democracy.” It draws its inspiration from the global conferences, the earth charter, the Hague agenda for peace, the campaign against landmines, the creation of the international criminal court, and the 1999 *UNDP Human Development Report*, advocating the reinvention of global governance. All the partners (national parliaments, town councils, state and regional bodies, trade unions, women’s groups, political parties, churches, companies, other organizations, and individuals) are urged to develop the ideas set out in the charter. The charter is to be signed by individuals, organizations, and representative bodies.

The charter aims to “create a democratic and inclusive system of international decision-making” by transforming global governance. *Global governance* is defined in the context of the charter as “democracy in international decision-making.” The document argues that “in many ways, we now have world government” composed of the G-8, the OECD, the Bank of International Settlements, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and other powerful if geographically delimited institutions such as NATO and the European Union. These are the “agencies of actual world government.” The charter aims to make them accountable to civil society and the world at large. Promoters of the charter called on the

millennium assembly to set in motion a “rigorous process to hold all agencies of global governance to account and democratise international decision-making.”

Three principles must guide this process: (1) openness and accountability, (2) environmental sustainability, and (3) justice. The first step consists in making the already existing processes of world administration and governance accountable: “We want to know what decisions are being taken and why. We want the decision takers to know they are answerable to the public in every country which feels the breath of international bodies.” The second step is to make sure that all decisions correspond to global standards of environmental sustainability. Last, these decisions should be “compatible with the principles of human rights and justice, including social and economic justice.” Promoters of the charter asked the millennium assembly and member-states to take “decisive action to put these principles into practice.” The environment, biodiversity, and climate change; international security and disarmament; international trade, finance and labor rights; international public health; communications; and international crime are issues that must be tackled effectively at a global level. The process should emanate from the United Nations, which “as an institution can hardly be blamed for the appalling behaviour of its member states.” The charter views the UN as “the only arena in which all countries sit side by side. For all its weakness, it retains an unmatched legitimacy in world affairs.” The charter continues, “The time has come to make democratic reform of international affairs our priority, both as an end in itself and as a means of solving many serious social and economic problems.”

The first overall aim is to “strengthen democratic accountability and participation in international decision-making.” The document makes twelve proposals to improve global governance.

1. “Give the UN General Assembly powers to scrutinise the work of UN agencies and other agencies of global governance; create a UN Parliamentary Assembly and an annual Forum of Civil Society; open international institutions to increased participation by civil society and elected representatives from member countries; bring the WTO into the UN system and strengthen co-operation between all international groupings under the UN system.”

2. “Create within the UN system an accountable, equitable and effective mechanism to monitor, supervise and regulate transnational corporations and financial institutions; and require transnational companies to adhere to an international code of conduct covering agreed principles concerning human rights, the environment and core labour standards.”

3. “Give UN institutions an additional and independent source of revenue such as taxation of foreign exchange transactions, aircraft and shipping fuels, arms sales and licensing use of the global commons.” [radio frequency, oceans, space, Antarctica].

To “maintain international peace and security,” the charter suggests additional steps.

4. “Reform the UN Security Council to open all decision-making to public scrutiny; phase out the single country veto and permanent membership; establish equitable representation from each region of the world; set up a high level early warning system; prioritise conflict prevention and provide effective

authority to mediate and intervene in disputes at an early stage, within national boundaries where necessary.”

5. “Establish a permanent, directly recruited UN Rapid Reaction Force to hold the peace in a crisis, police gross violations of human rights and support multilateral defence against aggression and genocide;”

6. “Make the UN register of arms mandatory; ratify and implement the Landmine Ban Treaty; outlaw all weapons of mass destruction; initiate programmes to control the arms trade, convert the arms industry to peaceful production and cut military spending world wide; strengthen accountability to the UN of all international military action; and reduce the size of national armies as part of a multilateral global security system.”

The charter proposes steps specifically to uphold fundamental human rights.

7. “Strengthen world citizenship based on compliance with and respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all international instruments on Human Rights, including the six core treaties on economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; racial discrimination; discrimination against women, children’s rights, torture, and the conventions on genocide, refugees and labour standards.”

The next overall aim, to “strengthen justice under international law,” requires the following step.

8. “Ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court; accept compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the UN Human Rights Committee; increase the Courts’ powers of enforcement; open the ICJ to individual petition and protect the judicial independence of the ICC.”

Last, the charter suggests steps to “promote social progress and better standards of life.”

9. “Establish a strong UN institution for economic and environmental security to promote international prosperity, protect the global commons and secure sustainable development.”

10. “Establish an International Environmental Court to enforce international treaties on the environment and protect the global commons.”

11. “Declare climate change to be an essential global security interest and establish a high-level international urgent action team to assist the UN Conference of the Parties on Climate Change to set a scientifically based global ceiling on greenhouse gas emissions, to allocate national shares of permissible emissions based on convergence to equal per capita rights, and to work with governments, companies, international agencies and NGOs to cut emissions of greenhouse gases to a sustainable level.”

12. “Make poverty reduction a global priority: secure universal access to safe drinking water, health care, housing, education, family planning, gender equality, sustainable development and economic opportunities, and strengthen the capacity of development agencies to eliminate malnutrition, preventable diseases and absolute poverty through conservation and equitable sharing of global

resources. Cancel the unpayable debts of the poorest nations and institute measures to prevent severe debt burdens from ever building up again” (See Charter99: www.Charter99.org).

While the Charter for Global Democracy addresses issues of global governance, the role of local governance is described in the World Charter for Local Self-Government. Local government is deemed to be essential in global participatory democracy. This charter differs from the other people’s treaties in that it does not emanate from NGOs, but from the UN Center for Human Settlements and the World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC). The charter draws up a framework for the operationalization of local democracy. The UN General Assembly adoption of the Habitat agenda in December 1996 is the political mandate at the basis of the project. The World Assembly of Cities and Local Authorities, which preceded the Habitat conference, asked for a charter of local self-government. In May 1988 the UNCHS, together with the WACLAC, released a draft. The final text will be presented for adoption by the UN Commission on Human Settlements in 2001 and referral to ECOSOC. The charter would then be presented to the special session of the UN General Assembly in 2001 on the occasion of the five-year review of the second Habitat conference. National governments and international organizations, local authorities and their associations, parliamentarians, NGOs, and civil society organizations were invited to participate in the consultation process.

In the current draft of the world charter, member-states “recognize” that global problems (identified in global conferences) must be dealt with at the local level and commit themselves to recognize the principle of local self-government in national legislation. Local authorities are the closest partners of central governments in implementing global conferences. The charter sets out the basic principles underlying any democratic local government system: autonomy, subsidiarity, and proximity (decisions are taken at the level closest to the citizens). The principle of subsidiarity is the basis for democratic and participatory development. The will of the people is the basis of the authority of governments at all levels. At the second Habitat conference, governments committed themselves to decentralization of authority and resources. Decentralization strengthens local authorities. Strong local democracy fosters public accountability and strengthens societies against corruption. This, of course, is good in itself. The problem is that this charter’s agenda—the implementation of the global consensus by local authorities—fundamentally distorts and corrupts the subsidiarity principle.

Local self-government is defined as “the right and ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population.” Local authorities are entitled to define appropriate forms of popular participation and civic engagement in decision making. Local authorities are to be empowered to establish and develop partnerships with all actors of civil society, particularly nongovernmental organizations and community-based organizations, and with the private sector and other interested stakeholders. Local authorities are to be involved, in the logic of partnership, in the negotiation and implementation of international plans of action concerning their roles and areas of responsibility.

International associations of local authorities already serve as a bridge between the UN and local authorities. The charter would formalize this link and thereby ensure the global-to-local movement of social, economic, and environmental policies and norms advocated at the habitat conference. The charter argues that the constitutional anchoring of local self-government on the basis of internationally recognized principles could make a crucial contribution to the implementation of sustainable development: local authorities are provided with a ready-made platform for action.

The charter would ensure local authorities worldwide the following rights: to form associations, to defend their common interests, to maintain adequate financial resources of their own, to levy taxes, to define appropriate forms of popular participation and civic engagement, to form legal entities with other local authorities, to cooperate with their counterparts in other countries, to have recourse to judicial remedy to safeguard their autonomy.

To assess progress in implementing the charter, a monitoring committee will be established by states' parties. The committee will include representatives of local authorities. The United Nations will provide its secretariat. The charter is subject to ratification by member-states. Instruments of ratification will be deposited with the UN secretary-general.

The Loss of Democratic Identity

At the center of the anti-market stance of the Global New Left is a caricature of the market as dominated by profit, ruthless competition, despotism, and mindless globalization. Profitability and managerial authority are the two realities of the market that Global New Left idealism can neither admit nor eliminate. A parallel process is used to disparage national sovereignty and replace it in practice by untried formulas meant to represent a form of democracy more advanced than democratic institutions. But the rule of law and constitutional legitimacy cannot be set apart and disunited if democratic identity is to be preserved.

As understood in past centuries, sovereignty referred to the allegedly absolute and unlimited supremacy of a king, chief executive, parliament, party, or class. That interpretation, founded on the dogma that the sovereign is not subject to ethical and constitutional principles, is a caricature of sovereignty. Ethics was split into private and public morality. Private morality applied to individuals and concerned the person's conscience and acts. Public morality was ruled by the reason of state: utility justified the means employed to overcome urgent problems. *Realpolitik* was the norm.

Democratic society is based on the rule of law and universal principles. In U.S. political culture, sovereignty as unqualified power was never a normative concept. The perennial values inherent in human dignity and democratic rule have been the essence of the American social contract. The United States shunned ethical dualism; although *Realpolitik* has occasionally been practiced, it was never considered an American principle. In democratic societies, human rights and the rule of law were above the arbitrary will of both government and individuals. The constitutionality of governmental acts and the legality of private actions are subject to judicial review.

The new paradigm considers the democratic model outmoded. Basing the democratic way of life on eternal truths or natural rights now seems too simple. The new model makes a global attempt to fill the vacuum created by the radical exclusion of family, business enterprise, religion, and nation-state as elemental basic communities in a process similar to the method proclaimed by Marx when he put Hegelian idealism on materialist legs. The traditional values underlying the Constitution and the American way of life are no longer true. Because of their abstract, idealist character, they are not relevant to present, global realities. The new paradigm is “realist”: rights are not defined abstractly, but related to needs. The new rights transcend legal commitments; they are larger, all-encompassing. Furthermore and critically, the sovereignty of the individual is asserted over that of hierarchical political institutions. Democratic people-centeredness is translated into the right to choose. The most radical implication of sovereign individualism is that any interference with individual self-determination and free choice is considered discriminatory. Yet the strategy of the UN system is global and collective: in its turn, the universality of rights is to be translated into global governance. The process is circular.

Universality does not refer any longer to the sovereignty of values that are above individual and collective arbitrariness, but to an alleged consensus on a new ethic. The meaning of the new values appears in the process of implementation, when they are operationalized. Sustainable development is perceived as an operational approach that expands people’s choices and activates all human rights through the clarification of concepts, monitoring mechanisms, enlargement, and changes in the consensus and in the conventions themselves. The transcendence of the rights process has replaced the transcendence of substantive rights. But when rights are replaced by a process, the transcendence of human rights can be hijacked by those who own and control the process. This is indeed what has happened. The democratic state has lost its trim.

In the present upheaval the vital elements of the contract that bind the United States are at stake. The most urgent political commitment should be to accept the need for and to promote a national debate on national purpose. The crisis of democracy is connected with a crisis of political leadership in the West: the Global New Left has taken a decisive lead while major stakeholders in the existing democracy seem passive. But there should not be any doubt about the long-term objectives of the rights movement: the creation of world “democratic” institutions in view of a world democracy, world citizen values, cross-cultural global identity, world citizen parties, and new treaties. The major objectives of the rights movement are explicit: the creation of a human rights court or the strengthening of the human rights capacity of the International Criminal Court, the integration of all human rights conventions into a single document, the global-to-local movement integrating UN norms into national law and local development practice, the UN bureaucracy bypassing the line of hierarchical authority in national governments.

The argument against traditional democratic institutions is that they lack the will and fail to meet the needs and rights of the people. The new paradigm suggests that existing institutions must be rethought and government reinvented. It calls for leaders endowed with vision, trailblazers, risk takers, innovators. The change invites political creativity.

Common sense and democratic tradition hold that state sovereignty has two parameters: external and internal sovereignty. *External sovereignty* means self-government and independence from external or illegitimate authority. Rightly defined, the external sovereignty of the individual refers to the citizen's obligation not to yield to pressure and brainwashing and to be self-determining. Only constitutional government operating under the rule of law can exercise sovereignty as a legitimate function that cannot be usurped by foreign authority or by groups that operate outside the boundaries of constitutional and legitimate sovereignty. Civil society has no reality other than the consensual—though primarily implicit—assent that citizens give to a constitution so understood. Perhaps an increasing number of problems that are global exceed the capacity of national states and therefore require intergovernmental coordination and international law conventions. It is also true that the common obligation requires a normative system of common values and rights. Hence the need to redefine the boundaries of external sovereignty. Sovereignty cannot be defended with adequate firmness if national policymakers are not aware of the various mechanisms used by those who deny that states need to be independent and sovereign when they determine what they want to be.

The second parameter of sovereignty is internal and concerns the authority of democratic institutions in the exercise of their constitutional functions. Anarchy and democracy are incompatible. The internal parameter of sovereignty is no other than the rule of law. Checks and balances are essential to the democratic process. The sovereignty of constituted democratic government is diversified and exercised in legislative, executive, and judicial functions.

But a dual devolution of power is presently taking place: on the one hand, the strengthening of the UN system is promoted at the expense of national sovereignty, and, on the other, the system's reliance on NGOs increases. NGOs are self-regulating and hardly subject to democratic control. There is no transparency in their networks, coalitions, and global strategic alliances. Their inbreeding contradicts their claims of openness.

The UN as it now stands has no legislative authority. Yet in various ways the UN system, NGOs, and civil society groups attempt to appropriate the legislative function of democratic government. They speak of a broad-based consultation and people's participation in declaring and promoting new rights, norms, and even treaties. This consultation is de facto limited to experts, individuals, and groups bound by the same ideology. The actors of change employ indirect and informal pathways to achieve their normative goals by methods that they themselves described as incubation, imbibition, diffusion, infusion, integration, clarification, or enlargement. Taking the spirit of the conferences' consensus as more important than substantive commitments is bound to lead to undemocratic distortions. The goals and intentions that drive the rights movement forward and the exercise of normative power that it pretends to own ought to be transparent, democratically determined, and operationalized within a system of democratic accountability.

A parallel conclusion concerns the judicial function of sovereignty. The implementation of the new paradigm is permitted to take place in a quasi-judicial manner on the basis of an ill-defined, self-declared mandate—a decidedly undemocratic process. The notion that the UN has received a mandate to work with NGOs as legitimate representatives of civil society is a construct. Treaty-monitoring bodies complain about the

non-binding character of the concluding observations that they make to national bureaucracies. They are right; they are non-binding and ought to remain so unless these “processes” are made accountable, until every member-state exercises its sovereign responsibility towards its own citizens and, externally, toward the global commonwealth.

Even more offensive to traditional democratic norms is the fact that in the implementation of this self-declared mandate those who proclaim the mandate and those who are controlled by the mandate are the same. According to traditional democratic norms, the enforcement of human rights not only belongs to member-states, but, within each state, to the judicial branch of government. When UN mechanisms or civil society groups assume the juridical interpretation of human rights and international law, a situation of double jeopardy results: a fundamental constitutional prerogative is denied to the democratic state to which it belongs, and the judicial function is taken away from the courts.

The nature and scope of the executive functions of the UN system are to be redefined. So is the relation between the UN and member states. The attempt made to shift executive power away from the sovereign states to the UN system is fraught with danger. The peril lies less in a disorderly proliferation of new rights and anarchic individualism than the strengthening of global governance. The UN system seeks to legitimize the enlargement of its mandate which it pursues for two fundamental but illegitimate reasons. The first concerns strategy: UN strengthening is sought for the operationalization of a radical agenda. The second concerns tactics, the method used for achieving the strategic goals of the Global New Left.

Any change in the mandate of the UN and of its agencies and associates may not be accomplished covertly and without national debate and democratic choice. Any grandiose restructuring that does not include proposals for establishing checks and balances and controls over appointments, activities, and outcomes misses the purpose of redefining the true mandate of the UN system. Internal streamlining, coordination of programs and activities, new and ever changing bureaucratic arrangements reflects inbreeding and stagnation. Substituting administrative reforms for development and progress in the achievement of what the UN is meant to accomplish is self-deceiving. Furthermore, the current mechanisms are in flux and exceedingly complex. Administrative reforms, streamlining internal arrangements, campaigns, and programs have not produced yet a centralized mechanism of decision and control—nor is there any democratic and effective opposition. The status and effective power of the General Assembly and other intergovernmental assemblies is another area of UN operations that requires close scrutiny. In the present structures, the assemblies are sovereign and intergovernmental. They are incapable and unwilling to act as the controlling authority of the executive activities of the UN system.

The test of the new paradigm resides in the reality of human development, not in the reification of rights. The promotion of human rights is a process inspired by values that are themselves part of a culture. A culture always is a matter of choice, a choice that ought to be freely and independently determined. Every society must decide what it wants to be. The debate has reached a stage when such a determination has become necessary.

The Health and Education Revolution

The new paradigm conceptualizes a pervasive global cultural revolution that integrates public health and public education into a broad new vision of human development. Health and education, the two pillars of social development, are the areas where the new paradigm pretends to have achieved its most tangible and revolutionary results. This chapter outlines how changes in health and education are embedded in the norms of the Global New Left, and how they are implemented through the parallel processes of global governance, not through ordinary democratic channels.

Health for All

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the UN's normative agency on health. WHO's mandate, as defined in its constitution, can be divided in two parts: a normative part—that is, standard-setting, formulation of paradigms, macro-targets and identification of values, on the one hand; and an interactive part, consisting in governance, technical cooperation to countries, health research, and implementation of WHO norms in member states. In the last ten years, as we shall see, WHO has overstated both its normative function and its practical role.

WHO translated its original mandate into a conceptual framework when it created the paradigm of *Health-for-All* (HFA) in 1977 by a resolution of the World Health Assembly as follows: health for all is the “attainment by all citizens of the world by the year 2000 of a level of health that would permit them to lead a socially and economically productive life” and make it possible for people to reach and maintain “the highest attainable level of health throughout their lives” (see WHA resolution 30.43).

At the 1978 Alma Ata conference, primary health care (PHC) was declared the way to attain HFA. Since then, HFA has been WHO's strategic objective and PHC its tactical principle. PHC refers to “essential health care made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community by means acceptable to them, through their full participation and at a cost that the community and the country could afford.” WHO then defined the *contents* of the health paradigm abstractly by the global goals it pursues, not by realistic priorities it could achieve. PHC rests on eight elements: health education, proper nutrition, safe water and basic sanitation, maternal and child health, immunization against the major infectious diseases, prevention and control of local endemic diseases, appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries, and provision of essential drugs. As an outcome of the 1994 Cairo conference, deemed crucial by WHO, reproductive health was, in practice, integrated into PHC: reproductive health—one of the core components of the new paradigm—became a matter of health care priority in a large number of member countries. In its normative capacity, WHO had formulated the definition of reproductive health.

Defined as a *process*, HFA was used as an instrument of social change and so became entangled in the implementation of the socio-political agenda of the UN system. Because of its entanglement, WHO was bound to grow less interested in what it had been mandated to do, namely health care. In pragmatic, operational terms, the goal of HFA was elusive. HFA lacked practical priorities and outcomes could hardly be monitored and quantified. Despite a common “baseline,” the HFA paradigm, member states inevitably interpreted health-for-all differently. Unable to concentrate on concrete objectives and priorities, WHO became uncertain as to the true nature of its mandate and moral commitment.

In the first decade after the Alma Ata declaration, the limits of the health-for-all paradigm became evident. The link between PHC and HFA could not be clearly analyzed. The paradigm failed to define the relationship between public health and individual health either conceptually and operationally. Total health and well-being are undoubtedly individual qualities. Public health seeks the highest attainable good for the largest number of people: PHC was the way chosen by WHO to achieve this utilitarian objective. In other words, two basic health care typologies coexisted in uneasy tension: on the one hand, the individual approach based on the right of each individual to have equal access to care and equal health care outcomes (the aim being *total health*); on the other, the common good, the welfare of society as a whole. WHO gave preference to public medicine and national health programs but could not change the prevailing individualistic outlook of health care supplied by traditional providers of health services.

In addition, there were antimarket undertones in the health-for-all strategy. WHO viewed the market as totally committed to the individual approach. “When was the market ever ethical?” has been WHO’s rhetorical question of unbelief in free enterprise since HFA was adopted as basic reference. Utility and ethics, the market and public health care, profit and equity were perceived as being necessarily at odds. In contradistinction, WHO claimed that HFA simultaneously involved global health policy in ethics (the ethics of public health) and development (an objective concerning all).

In the following decade and during Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima’s tenure as WHO’s director general (1988–1998), dramatic changes in WHO’s conceptual framework and strategy took place, and the preparations for proclaiming a new HFA strategy got underway. In the context of globalization, growing inequity, and the alleged dominance of the market “creed,” health-for-all needed to be reviewed to conform to the spirit of the new global paradigm and to become not only holistic but also people-centered and sustainable. HFA had to adapt to the parameters established by the world conferences of the 1990s and WHO’s Executive Board launched the desired reform. In May 1995, the World Health Assembly (WHA)—the yearly assembly of the 191 governments that are members of WHO—requested the director-general to take the necessary steps for renewing the HFA strategy and to develop a new holistic health policy based on the concepts of equity and solidarity, emphasizing the individual’s, the family’s, and the community’s responsibility for health and placing health within the new overall sustainable development framework. The focus was on global tasks. At that time, the trend was to broaden priorities rather than to narrow them. The pendulum had swung in the direction of collective welfare and away from private medicine.

WHO claimed that the global conferences had given it, and the UN system at large, a *new mandate*. As

the UN normative agency in health, WHO had to implement the consensus. The rights approach was mainstreamed in the organization through a human rights focal point. The right to health was enlarged and reinterpreted. Health was integrated in global security. The long-term strategic goals of WHO are now those of the new paradigm: poverty eradication, global social equity, population stabilization through “people-centeredness,” participation and environmental protection. Common to WHO and all UN agencies is their emphasis on reproductive health and rights, gender equality, “healthy cities,” a special attention to youth and women as “vulnerable groups.” More than ever, equity as a value became WHO’s guiding principle. WHO identified with global governance mechanisms, in particular a strengthened partnership between the health agency and NGO partners acting as experts and other actors such as the World Bank or ILO helping WHO enforce its global norms.

The Characteristics of the New Health Paradigm

Holism is the first characteristic of the new health paradigm. From the start, WHO’s concept of health has been holistic: the founders of the organization defined health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO 1994, 1). WHO’s mandate has always been, in the words of Gro Harlem Brundtland, who became WHO’s director general in 1998, “broad and impressive” (Brundtland 1998). The new paradigm broadened it even further.

The report *Health for All in the Twenty-First Century*, presented to the 1998 World Health Assembly as a framework for the development of future policy, stresses that the determinants of health lie very largely outside of the reach of the formal health sector: in the environment, education, lifestyles, economic and demographic trends, knowledge and communication, industry, social structures, and even in the individual’s spiritual aspirations. This is the current and enlarged vision of WHO’s assumed mandate. Within the framework of sustainable development, health is no longer approached as a separate sector, but in its relation with other sectors to achieve the common goal of sustainability. This interaction with other sectors provides WHO with a mandate in environmental protection and social equity. On the other hand, development partners in environment or education now have a mandate in health-for-all. WHO cannot produce health in isolation. And there cannot be development without health. It is a two-way street.

The formal recognition that health is a product of partnerships is a fundamental characteristic of the new health paradigm. People must *participate* and assume responsibility for their own health and that of others. The new health-for-all policy implies more than ever a participatory approach to health care. Just as sustainable development cannot be realized without the participation of all actors and stakeholders, so HFA can be achieved only through the interactive partnership of all sectors of society. Brundtland highlights the need for WHO to forge strategic alliances and called the other UN agencies, the private sector, the NGO community, and the world of research to act as WHO’s “natural partners” in an effort to “unleash a global social movement for health and the role of health in development” (Brundtland 1999a). The global health concept, health promotion, prevention, cure, and rehabilitation have a scope that encompasses all sectors and activities that influence health.

As it assumes the global function of integrating health in sustainable development, WHO positions itself to take leadership in health. If it manages to do so, WHO will ultimately define the role in health of the other sectors. At the same time, the holistic approach to health calls for a new and global health system. This system would be evolving “through a balanced, cooperative approach to sustainable human development in which the health sector is one of a number of intersectoral players in an open system or ‘web configuration’” (Bell et al. 1997, 14).

The process has a name: *Intersectoral Action for Health* (IAH). IAH’s terms of reference were approved by the 1996 meeting of the World Health Assembly. The process is defined—in typical bureaucratic language—as a “recognized relationship between part or parts of the health sector with part or parts of another sector which has been formed to take action on an issue to achieve health outcomes (or intermediate health outcomes) in a way that is more effective, efficient or sustainable than could be achieved by the health sector acting alone.” (Bell et al. 1997, 3)

As we have seen, the interaction of parts and a common configuration are the essence of the holistic process. To realize IAH, health partners must first recognize the need to work together, and this recognition in turn requires common awareness, health education, “more emphasis on outcomes as opposed to process,” stakeholder analysis—that is, “greater clarity about who does what” at the global and national levels, “along with common frameworks in which IAH can take place within an expanded range of stakeholders, particularly those outside of the traditional health circle” (Bell et al. 1997, 5). In other words, IAH is a typical mechanism of global governance.

The principle that governance transcends government is an essential component of the new paradigm. Global governance for health

goes beyond government or the management of services. It is the system through which society organizes and manages the affairs of these sectors in order to achieve the goals of health for all. Only with the collaboration of the many interested sectors that have an impact on health can the promise of the vision be realized. This is particularly important since we recognize that the roots of good health and the causes of much ill-health lie outside the health services (Yach 1998).

The need for partnerships stems from the enlargement of health to include multisectoral determinants such as economic crisis, unhealthy environments, and risky behavior. Consequently, WHO not only reaches out to organizations not traditionally involved in health, but assumes leadership and transforms IAH into governance. “Compressing the time required to accomplish major and tangible results,” says Brundtland, “is the task for leadership in the 21st century. This leadership must be technical. It must be political. And it must be moral” (WHO 1999e, viii). Global health governance can be defined as multisectoral integration and global participation; global governance and health-for-all are thus indivisible. Brundtland also exhorts all stakeholders to a greater collective effort and invites the public health community

to step out of professional confinements and take an active part in the shaping of the political agenda.

Too many public health professionals regard politics as an obstacle to what they see as rational decision-making rather than an essential part of democratic governance. This too has to change (Brundtland 1999a).

This horizontal enlargement to link up with other health actors is part of WHO's new vision. Such an enlargement of roles is common to all sectors ruled by the new paradigm. Everybody has all roles to play. Health professionals must become politicians, albeit in a governance, not a democratic government, context. Politicians are health stakeholders and must become health actors. Enlargement and partnership are mutually related and synergetic. They produce mutually beneficial effects that could not be produced in sectoral isolation. WHO recognized a substantial shift in its strategic thinking of the health agency was needed in order to move

from our traditional approach—which too often has favoured our own small scale projects—to one which gives more emphasis to strategic alliances. Alliances will allow us both to learn from and to influence the thinking and spending of other international actors; and they will allow us to shape what we do into a broader picture. WHO is the lead agency in health. But we can lead more effectively when we link up with others and agree on a division of labor and on ground rules for conducting our relationships. In this way we can create real partnerships for the attainment of tangible health outcome. (WHO 1999e, xvii)

Not surprisingly, NGOs were substantially consulted in Brundtland's reform process. Upon her appointment, Brundtland announced her plan to draw up new guidelines for WHO's cooperation with NGOs "to establish new mechanisms for interaction with civil society in Member States." (Brundtland 1998) WHO has moved forward toward official recognition of the impact of multisectoral NGOs on health. Such recognition would allow NGOs to participate in WHO's planning and decision-making and to speak at the Executive Board meetings and at the World Health Assembly. WHO's analysis is now that a combination of top-down/bottom-up approaches is necessary to integrate health into global, national and local sustainable development plans. A bottom-up strategy would result in the development of a national strategy, itself the starting point of a top-down approach. In practice, as we know, the bottom-up input comes almost exclusively from NGOs.

Another aspect of the holistic process is the system-wide convergence of organizational changes at WHO and changes in the UN system. Just as the implementation of sustainable development and UN reform have converged, so have the new health paradigm and WHO's internal reform, which Brundtland vigorously undertook at the beginning of her mandate. UN reform fosters system-wide coordination; so do Brundtland's reform initiatives. The UN and WHO reforms are coordinated and mutually reinforcing. They both seek to promote intersectoral action for health. The health organization, for its part, believes that the most efficient way to address global problems is to coordinate development initiatives within the UN system.

Strategic mutuality and administrative coordination between WHO and the UN system is nothing new. WHO has played an important role in formulating and marshalling support for the new global consensus. At the world conferences, particularly in Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, WHO managed to put health at the heart of the development agenda. HFA is now an explicit priority of global governance, and Brundtland's aim is to put health "on top of the political agenda" of global governance.

The enlargement of the health sector was vertical as well as horizontal. It was meant to take a major step forward when a spiritual component was integrated into health. In January 1998 WHO's Executive Board proposed a new draft of WHO's definition of health: "Health is a *dynamic* state of complete physical, mental and *spiritual* well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO 1998d). As the WHO leadership sees it, the current aging of many populations and the ensuing cultural or social emergence of the question of death and medically assisted suicides, suffering, isolation, depression on a massive scale necessitate a reflection on the spiritual component in health policy. The spiritual approach focuses on the quality of life and, more specifically, it reacts against the paradigm of growth and economic development at the expense of mental and spiritual well-being.

There are two practical questions, however: whether the spiritual dimension of health has discernible contents and whether spirituality, whatever WHO thinks this means, can be medicalized. WHO's new health paradigm does not resolve these questions. The social element of health already medicalizes housing, education, and human rights and thereby substantially stretches the supposed legitimate domain of the health sector. But quite aside from the fact that, by this expansive definition, no one will ever be in a state of total physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being, is holistic health for all a realistic goal?

The shift from growth to quality of life implied in the enlargement of health to include the spiritual dimension relates to another paradigmatic shift: the shift from *life expectancy* to *health expectancy* as an indicator of value and health. In the new health-for-all policy, values transcend the physical dimension of health and technological innovations. Health expectancy establishes health as a value that transcends life. Health, as opposed to life itself, relates to *quality of life*. The implication is that without health, life has no quality and is not worth living. From this philosophy to euthanasia there is only one step.

Health expectancy is a paradigm that implies a shift from the utilitarian outlook—the greatest good for the largest number of people—to the qualitative and individualistic parameter of health care. WHO's anthropological vision is global and concerns all people, yet it is centered on the individual's quality of life. WHO defines quality of life as

an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns. It is a broad ranging concept affected in a complex way by the person's physical health, psychological state, personal beliefs, social relationships and their relationship to salient features of their environment (WHOQOL).

Quality of life, then, is the result of a sustainable balance among all of these components. But how to measure such a thing? Is this not impossible for all practical purposes? WHO apparently thinks otherwise. To assess the quality of life, along with traditional morbidity and mortality data, WHO has developed so-called quality-of-life instruments (WHOQOL) to measure positive health or progress in well-being (positive health emphasizes preventive rather than curative methods). WHOQOL instruments can be used in a variety of cultural settings. Most assessments in medicine are obtained by clinical examinations and laboratory tests. In contradistinction, the WHOQOL instruments, by focusing on individuals' "own views of their well-being," not only on objective medical criteria, provide a "new perspective on disease." For example, it is understood that diabetes involves poor body regulation of blood glucose, "but the effect of the illness on the perception that individuals have of their social relationships, working capacity, and financial status has received little systematic attention" (WHOQOL). The quality-of-life instruments are tools that may be used in medical research and clinical practice: they indicate areas in which a person is most affected and they help the practitioner in making the best choices.

Quality-of-life instruments change the interaction between patient and doctor. Patients themselves will find their health care "more meaningful." The new approach also changes the evaluation of treatments. For instance, chemotherapy for cancer "may prolong a person's life, but may only do so at considerable cost to their quality of life" (WHO 1999j). Because quality-of-life instruments measure the relationship between the health care service and the patients' quality of life, they are also destined to be used in health policy-making. They "provide new insights into the nature of disease by assessing how disease impairs or impacts the subjective well-being of a person across a whole range of areas" (WHOQOL). Could quality-of-life instruments ever be used to justify and promote euthanasia?

WHO's quality of life instruments cover six domains: (1) physical health (energy and fatigue, pain and discomfort, sleep, and rest); (2) psychological (bodily image and appearance, negative feelings, positive feelings, self-esteem, thinking, learning, memory, and concentration); (3) level of independence (mobility, activities of daily living, dependence on medicinal substances and medical aids, work capacity); (4) social relations (personal relationships, social support, sexual activity); (5) environment (financial resources, freedom, physical safety and security, health and social care, accessibility and quality, home environment, opportunities for acquiring new information and skills, participation in and opportunities for recreation and leisure, physical environment—pollution, noise, traffic, climate, transport); and (6) spirituality, religion, and personal beliefs. In subsequent analysis, as mentioned earlier, WHO policymakers integrate spirituality and religion in the psychological domain. As a consequence, four domains remain: (1) physical, (2) psychological, (3) social relationships, and (4) environment (see www.who.int/msa/muh/mhp/ql).

The integration of spirituality, religion, and personal beliefs into psychology, the science of mental process and behavior, parallels the importance given to soft social science in the formulation and implementation of the sustainable development paradigm. Just as the latter displaces the authority of trained economists and entrepreneurs in favor of NGO experts, so the WHO paradigm displaces the authority of trained doctors with a variety of non-medical perspectives which change the nature of doctors' intervention.

Mental health is a major component of quality of life. The burden of mental health care is likely to become heavier in coming decades. WHO's statistical evidence is that five of the ten leading causes of disability worldwide are mental health problems. The incidence of depressive illness increases with age, and WHO predicts that depression will be the second leading cause of disease burden in 2020. However, WHO does not prioritize mental health and appears satisfied to declare that it will work to see that "mental health and particularly the neglected scourge of depression is given the attention it deserves" (WHO 1999e, xii). By their nature mental problems are personal problems manifested by syndromes that WHO prefers to dodge, particularly teen-age depressions caused by drug addiction, parental marriage breakdowns or the post-abortion syndrome. In cases raising issues that are not politically correct, the paradigm reverts to a collective approach, and no longer uses the personal qualitative parameter. Although the problem of depression is particularly acute in high income countries, the paradigm insists on social conditions that are primarily related to underdevelopment: poverty, limited access to resources and education, and human rights violations. WHO's qualitative analysis of remedial steps to mental illness is scanty and unidimensional. In the logic of the paradigm, it uses integration as a panacea. The universal remedy is to integrate mental health in sustainable development and to address the broader issues affecting mental health, such as environmental degradation or gender inequity, rather than concentrate on individual cases and treatment. According to WHO, mental health programs should be implemented in interaction with all sectors of society such as government, education, employment, environment, transport, and other community services as well as non-governmental organizations: health support groups, churches, sporting and leisure clubs, and other bodies. WHO also recommended the social integration of marginalized groups, such as refugees, disaster victims, the socially alienated, the mentally disabled, the very old and infirm, abused children and women, and the poor. These global solutions to individual problems are, needless to say, purely abstract.

To conclude on this point, the quality of life paradigm is individualistic in the sense that it is no longer related to universal and transcendent values, but to the anarchic right to choose, or to the sovereignty of the individual. In the new paradigm, personal autonomy and self-determination are viewed as the two essential qualities of individual well-being. The new view of the self, explains Solomon Benatar (WHO expert and professor at the department of medicine at the University of Cape Town, South Africa) emphasizes individual rights and a society structured as a free association of individuals "arising from and shaped by their societies with their freedom to choose embedded in social attachments and their rights balanced by responsibilities to themselves, to others and to society, including future generations" (Benatar 1997, 79–80). The individual decides what is good for him; he seeks his own pleasure and the power needed to sustain his well-being. But he lives in an environment of culturally determined values. The anarchical concept of human liberty does away with the very notion of transcendental norms, but not with social obligation. As in times past, a new Epicurianism coexists with a Stoic view of public responsibility.

In the new paradigm, health is a fundamental right. Historically, the language of rights has been a powerful political instrument used by progressive groups to promote their agendas. Although UN documents and strategy on human rights increasingly emphasize the rights of groups, the concept of human rights has an

individualist orientation. “The enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health (often referred to as the right to health) is one of the fundamental rights of each individual to his or her own highest potential in terms of health” (WHO 1998a). As a human right, the right to health is abstract, that is, independent from social status, wealth, gender, and other individual factors. It is also independent of the collective will. But health is always relative to individual needs and practical applications. Health is not “an end in itself, but a resource for everyday life that enables individuals to realize aspirations and strategic needs to change and cope with their environment” (WHO 1998c, 206). As people are biologically and genetically different, individual health choices necessarily leads to different patterns of health. But health also depends on global components and constraints over which the individual has no control. Individual differences, conflicting aspirations, fundamental disagreement on values, are bridged over—not resolved—by means of a social contract that embodies a pragmatic consensus on global health priorities. But who are the parties to this contract? The UN and its agencies, on the one hand? On the other, the general public, national governments, suppliers of health services, patients, women, teenagers, the poor, or just the UN partners? No one can know. The fact that WHO constantly needs to clarify its paradigms, to redefine its priorities, and to reorganize its structures indicates that the contents of the alleged contract are uncertain and that the consensus on which it rests is brittle and not as definitive as claimed.

This uncertainty is highlighted in the way WHO attempts to define the core content of the right to health. WHO reifies the right to health by relating it to other social and economic rights most of which are implied in primary health care: the right to food, water, clothing, health care, education and basic social services, and the right to security in case of unemployment, sickness, disability, old age, or lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond an individual’s control. The mutual reification of human rights is the ground that allowed the paradigm to claim, first, that the right to health is real because it integrates food, water, a good environment, nursing homes, and social security and, secondly, that the achievement of public health goals and the promotion and respect for human rights are complementary. Besides, defining the core content of the right to health has a purpose: health policy. If the purpose of health policy is social engineering and the implementation of strategic goals that are no part of the democratic purpose, it has no consensual foundation. Health policy cannot be reduced either to the mere provision of medical services, or to declaratory idealism and generic goals such as poverty eradication and gender equity. It needs a consensual purpose and it is judged according to what it achieves.

The failure of declaratory idealism is often pitiful. Good will dissipates in ideological conflict. Expectations created by the promotion of the right to health exacerbate the awareness of unfulfilled priorities and aspirations. People are incited to sue everybody else for discrimination and malpractice. The health paradigm is no exception to the iron law controlling the nature and evolution of idealistic projects. It started as a holistic promise to promote health for all, but the right to health fell at the level of the right to pleasure. Health becomes an obsession of the well-to-do who enjoy the best of health care. Yet the most affluent countries are also those where the cost of medical services is heaviest. The hedonistic principle contradicts solidarity, the commitment to the poor, and the quest for global equity. Abstract generalities mushroom, grand

programs and sophisticated plans succeed one another, and CEOs in high position, like the emperor of the nursery tale, may ultimately be found without clothes. Most directly affected by the resulting alienation of ideology from personal reality is the resolution of the perennial problem of suffering and death that every human being has to confront, sooner or later, face-to-face. As Hobbes wrote, death is not only the end of pleasure, but also the end of the individual's power over oneself. The option of achieving death with Stoic dignity by means of medically assisted suicide appears logical. And the tension between individualist goals and public health finds no solution.

One fundamental aspect of WHO's idealism is its collectivism. In its application, the health paradigm resorts to collective concepts and objectives. WHO's new vision focuses on the need to address the challenge of sustainability and of societies' changed relationship to nature. WHO has been one of the first organizations to respond to the ecological concern. According to John Last, emeritus professor of epidemiology at the University of Ottawa and an expert in health ethics consulted by WHO, global change has produced a "scientific consensus" (Last 1997, 95) concerning the adverse effect of human activity on the earth's climate: global warming, attenuation of stratospheric ozone, the population explosion and depletion of resources, reduced biodiversity, environmental pollution, desertification, ecosystem changes, related to the emergence or re-emergence of dangerous pathogens (infections). A desired outcome of the scientific consensus is ecosystem health, defined by John Last as a "sustainable state of harmony among the living things that share an ecosystem.... The ethical principle here is respect for life in all its manifestations and respect for future generations" (Last 1997, 111). The global health outlook on nature changed by moving from dominion to stewardship (see Benatar 1997, 80). Global change entails going from "knowledge and power over" to "wisdom and power with" (Benatar 1997, 80).

Ecosystem health has come to be considered as an important determinant of health. So is global health ethics as it affects medical practice. Alexander Capron (university professor of law and medicine, University of Southern California) has explained that there have been phases in the development of health ethics (Capron 1997, 141–52). The first stage was *medical ethics*, also called *deontology*. It regulated the treatment of individual patients. Then in the late 1960s came the stage of *bioethics*. Physician dominance was replaced by shared, interdisciplinary decision-making. The first two phases were minimalist in the sense that there was not much concern about general health policy and issues of resource allocation. A third stage in the 1980s recognized that the legitimate interests of the community had to be considered in framing the ends of medicine and the resulting societal obligations in health care. Lately, bioethics moved into a fourth stage of development in which health determinants transcend health care.

The perspective is now holistic and equity oriented. Equity as the concept founding public health ethics brings with it an operational meaning: public health addresses the need of care for "those whose health status is worst and is exposed to the greatest needs" (WHO 2000a). The Hippocratic oath once guided the ethics of the individual medical practitioner with the individual patient (compassionate care, respect of individual choice, confidentiality, and autonomy). By contrast, the new policy adopts the ethics of public health. Public health—the health of the greater public—must, according to WHO, "discriminate between

those whose means are less than others and those whose needs are greater than others. We need to get back to some of those fundamental concepts” (WHO 2000a). Because the new health paradigm refers to the well-being of the community, equity takes precedence over a respect for autonomy (of individuals, doctors, and also of nation-states). According to WHO, equity inheres in the logic of global governance and the sovereignty of human rights. In fact, “global opinion has begun to shift towards an increased concern for the health of the poor and a reduction in health inequalities. As a first step ... health objectives should take into account conditions prevailing among the poor rather than in society as a whole” (WHO 2000a). The new vision demands for a systemic approach, a worldwide view that integrates environmental, economic, and social reality and needs-in brief, a global demand for sustainable health development.

Clearly, such a view places a premium on ethics. The ethical dimension was lacking in the Alma Ata framework. Despite a strong focus on equity and social justice, WHO later recognized that Alma Ata’s focus on gender issues was very weak and that the links between health and human rights had not been developed. The consensus now is that HFA can only be achieved if it is founded on those new values. As senior official Derek Yack has put it:

The ethical issues around technology have become so complex, from cloning to transplantation, the beginning of life, the end of life, the definition of motherhood, all these things are changing, and they all require very complex, long-term considerations (Peeters 1998c).

The 1994 meeting of the Health Assembly focused its general debate on ethics, particularly on equality of access to health services. The new health-for-all policy of 1998 formally recognizes that health is not just a technical matter: human values must permeate HFA. As we have seen, the new policy makes even the spiritual dimension of health explicit. Health-for-all in the twenty-first century acknowledges “the uniqueness of each person and the need to respond to each individual’s spiritual quest for meaning, purpose and belonging” (WHO 1998a).

But WHO’s new ethics are global values. In health as in other areas, the quiet revolution shifts the focus from interpersonal ethics to global ethics. The new values of empathy, multiculturalism, gender equity, respect for the environment, a deeper understanding of human rights lead to a recognition of the need for new global ways of thinking. In fact, WHO seeks a balance system between epidemiological, technological, and economic pressures, on the one hand, and ethical imperatives such as equity and solidarity, on the other. According to H. Nakajima, because of economic pressures, monotheistic ethics as such will not be applicable in the future: it will have to be balanced against considerations of an economic nature. “WHO’s call for new partnerships for health recognizes the public’s right and responsibility to participate in defining and implementing policies that influence its health and way of life. It also acknowledges that ethical values must be worked out with the individuals and communities directly concerned” (WHO Ethics 1999).

These new values transcend political changes and the “fads” of consumerism sweeping world markets. The new health ethic relates equity and sustainability. According to Daniel Callahan from the

Hastings Center in New York, “a medicine that is captive to passing political currents, or dominated by market forces, or happy to give people whatever they want regardless of its benefit, is a medicine that invites inequity” (Callahan 1997, 161). Consumers also have a right to expect that products on the shelves do not contain substances dangerous to their health.

Alexander Capron, an expert from the leading NGO in health ethics CIOMS (Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences) holds that “no aspect of policy-making is beyond ethical analysis. Even apparently technical decisions ... rest on premises that need to be held up to examination, unpacked, and restated in terms that recognize and justify the value preferences on which they rest. Decision-making that fails to engage in this process is liable to yield results that are not defensible or durable.” (Capron 1997, 148) Capron advocates a “mixed methodology,” in fact case methodology widely used in education, common law or jurisprudence. He thinks that

The conclusions reached about a series of cases or problems will point to certain underlying concepts and principles that one ought to try to apply to new cases; indeed, I believe one is obliged to strive for consistency in resolving new cases and problems in light of their similarities and differences with prior ones. (Capron 1997, 143)

The relation between WHO and the market, called the private sector in UN terminology, has not been easy. The core of the antimarket argument is ideological. Health equity and the market are widely perceived as mutually hostile. The assumed fundamental problem is that health care and the market approach human life and behavior in essentially different ways. Medicine is, “at bottom, in its nature and ideals, an altruistic and philanthropic institution, aiming to serve others, not itself” (Callahan 1997, 158). The market, by contrast, is “a set of impersonal mechanisms and incentives, premised on a belief in the ultimate force of self-interest.” (p. 158) Adam Smith himself believed that the market needed an “undergirding of a strong moral culture,” but contemporary market theorists hold that “human behavior is little more than an effort to maximize self-interested utility, how much dressed-up in the language of morality and the common good.” (p. 158) The new ideology is committed to “replace the current free market values paradigm and its preoccupations with competition, productivity and economic growth” (Bell et al. 1997, 14) with its own values.

The right to health is the *deus ex machina* used by antimarket ideologists to relate health policy to the paradigm’s assumptions. WHO’s 1995 Task Force on Health and Development established in the wake of the global conferences to mainstream health in sustainable development, blamed “excessive materialism” for undermining “health and community values in favor of economic efficiency and profit.” (WHO 1998b) The right to health “challenges the trend to materialist individualism by promoting health as a ‘social good’ and defending the intrinsic value of health” (WHO 1998b). The right to health is non-negotiable because it is a social good. Health is a social good because it has intrinsic value. WHO’s insistence on the right to health as a social good thus makes two points in one: first, health is a right per se, not contingent upon status, individual circumstances or public policy; second, the right to health is a social right in the sense that there cannot be an

equitable social order when and where the right to health is not properly implemented.

Many at the UN have looked at the rights approach as a way to countervail the power of the market. The logic of solidarity and human rights must replace “the logic of competition,” which is “the soul of globalization.” It is the duty of member states and of the UN to give “a conscience to the economy,” and so to bridge the gap between “the theoretical equality of human rights” on the one hand, and the “objective and increasing economic inequality, inside and among nations,” on the other. The remedy to the evils of globalization is the “realization of the unitarian ideal of humankind embodied in the very name of our Organization.” (Ricupero, 1998)

What is the relationship between new medical and technological progress created by the private sector, free trade, and the new paradigm? Travel, trade, communication technologies, and also the spread of new values and ideas have had an impact on health in various ways. Mass production and distribution are blamed for contributing to the spread of infectious diseases over large areas. The traffic of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol threatens health, but is promoted—so goes the argument—by the market and the free trade agreements that have resulted from international negotiations such as the Uruguay Round. Medical technological progress, new surgical procedures, rehabilitation, long term treatment of diseases such as cancer, have created grave problems in the allocation of funds available for health care. Technological innovation resulting from medical research and business investment in health is a product of the private sector. But instead of bringing together the health sector and the market, the leftist agenda disaggregates them ideologically and considers progress as a new source of contention between health and the private sector.

A first argument is that technical progress is the most important source of the high cost of medicine and of its constant escalation. As the possibilities of improving health increase, the standard of care climb and the pressure for innovation accelerates: a vicious circle considered typical of the market process. In a culture of equity, everyone has a right to high-cost medicine. Expensive new technologies “are, for the most part, far more beneficial to individual health than to population health” (Callahan 1997, 156–57) Costly curative interventions benefit a few and exclude the needy.

A second antimarket argument is the market’s resistance to sharing new information and technology, the possible impact of a WTO agreement on intellectual property rights (TRIPS). Some fear that TRIPS requirements for intellectual property rights could lead to a higher cost burden for newer, patent-protected essential drugs, further reducing access to health care. Brundtland wants WHO to be involved from the beginning when trade agreements affect health, and to analyze and monitor the pharmaceutical and public health implications of new international agreements. WHO’s assumption is that at least one third of the world’s population still lacks access to essential drugs. Countries have an obligation to safeguard universal access to essential drugs and must review their options under international agreements in order to do so. WHO should carry out this work in a participatory manner, with its member states and the WTO, the World Intellectual Property Organization, UNCTAD, industry, public interest NGOs. The Secretary General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) asked:

Is it credible to claim co-responsibility for human rights and the environment on the basis of the fundamental unity of humankind and, at the same time, to deny in practice that unity when we refuse to share resources and technology with those who do not have the means to solve some of the problems at the root of human rights violations and environmental degradation? ... There is no way out of this dilemma if we accept that the economy has nothing to do with moral considerations of equity and solidarity, in other words, if we believe that ... the economy does not need to have regard or respect for human rights. (Ricupero 1998)

The thrust of the antimarket argument now is that market forces have become too powerful. Business operates freely across transnational borders, often out of the control of governments. The market values can be changed only if the corporate power of business is challenged. The responsibility for unresolved problems, increasing poverty, violence, ecological degradation among others is still attributed, in one way or the other, to free enterprise. And the question is insistently asked: why, with all that is known about the burden of disease and what contributes to health

are we only now seriously examining the subject of development with a view to understanding economic growth as a means to human development rather than as an end in itself? Why is it that most of the international covenants and laws governing the free market, global trade and the interests of transnational corporations are enforceable but those pertaining to human rights and health are lacking in firm accountability mechanisms? (Bell et al. 1997, 9).

However, the weight of the antimarket ideology has recently shifted from professed incompatibility to attempted partnership; a new approach is in the offing. In short there is at WHO, just as there is in the UN system at large, a change in the attitude towards business. WHO's new strategic objective is to put market forces in competition with global health governance. The outcome could be some kind of *positive tension* between the two. The health sector still claims that it will never completely align its objectives with the market and find a common interface. But couldn't the two sectors draw together in a *common ground*? As in other areas such as trade and industry, there are common aims between the health and the private sectors. Brundtland invites the two to join in a dialogue on the issues facing them. She says the business sector should recognize that "investing in health" is sound economics. The world has dangerously underestimated the threat bacteria and viruses are posing to national security and economic growth. Yet strategies to defend the world against malaria, TB and AIDS receive less than 2 percent of the funding devoted to global military expenditures. Economic development goes hand in hand with good health (WHO 1999i). "From being perceived as an unproductive consumer of public budgets, health is now gradually being understood to be a central element of productivity itself," Brundtland said in her 1999 Davos Economic Forum presentation. (WHO 1999b) Yet Brundtland also said: "the private sector has an important role to play both in technology development and the provision of services. We need open and constructive relations with the private sector and industry, knowing

where our roles differ and where they may complement each other.” (Brundtland 1998) In other words, WHO now wants to develop a sound relationship with the private sector and to tackle matters of contention dividing the two sectors, such as public health approach versus profit-making, tobacco-promotion, access to drugs, breast-milk substitutes, health technology and health insurance.

The New Universalism

Despite this shift of perspective, WHO continues to claim global leadership in health and more than ever postures itself as the world’s health agency in charge of managing the health agenda of the world community. As the lead agency in health, WHO pretends to hold a comprehensive mandate. But Brundtland remarked that “a mandate is no road-map... We need to focus our work.” (Brundtland 1998) When she became director-general of the health agency, she also referred to years of unclarity regarding the real purpose of WHO and announced that a new strategy was again needed.

To guide its work in the coming years, the health organization declared four “interconnected strategic themes.” The first two concern where WHO will focus its efforts, the other two concern how WHO will operate. WHO first sees itself in need to be more focused on accomplishments and health outcomes and it intends to become more effective in developing and supporting health systems. In its future operation, WHO intends to be more “impact-oriented” in its work with individual countries and finally “more innovative in creating influential partnerships” (WHO 1999e, xi). Although WHO claims that it has no other aim than “to make a difference,” the new agenda hardly appears modest in scope and its realist outlook does not succeed in hiding its idealistic tendencies.

Vision, commitment, and leadership are the three components of Brundtland’s approach. The vision is further progress and universal implementation in what she calls the *health revolution*. The paramount priority that inspires WHO’s new paradigm is to lead out of poverty the billion people who will enter the 21st century without having benefited from the health revolution. A new trend should be set in motion to make people understand the implications of poverty and, once again, to change their ways of thinking, to invite them to commit themselves and engage in a greater collective effort to promote health. As already mentioned, the new paradigm is not just a call to governments alone. It means “harnessing the energies and resources of the private sector and civil society” in synergic interaction. (WHO 1999e, x)

Brundtland takes the operational model she intends to follow from her experience with sustainable development. After all, she is the one who coined the phrase and defined sustainable development. She always believed that

you cannot make real changes in society unless the economic dimension of the issue is fully understood. I firmly believe that this is what took “the environment” from being a cause for the committed few to becoming a societal issue for the attention of major players. The scientific facts were gathered. The true costs of environmental degradation were analysed and enumerated in figures.

Then, gradually governments and parliaments started to vote incentives to change behavioural patterns among industry and consumers. There is still far to go in the field of the environment and sustainable development, but the trend has been started (WHO 1999e, viii).

This is the pattern that will be used in health reform: the scientific facts concerning health are available and quantified; issues and priorities are put on the agenda; attitudes change and governments are to act; everyone ought to get on board and follow the leader. It may seem paradoxical, however, that WHO's director-general should select an economic starting-point. For the forward movement prided itself in the past for having shifted from the economic to the people-centered approach. But the new paradigm turns things around: good health is good economics. It is, of course, common sense that health has economic implications. According to WHO, better health not only improves people's quality of life, but also increases their productivity. Diseases like tuberculosis disproportionately affect poor people while malaria and HIV/AIDS are, particularly in Africa, "major constraints to economic growth" (WHO 1999e, ix). Investments in health are investments in human potential, which is the greatest resource for development.

The new paradigm, however, continues to mix economic realism with equity. The core of the present argument is that "wise investments in health can prove to be the most successful strategies to lead people out of poverty" (WHO 1999e, viii). Ill-health in countries constituting a majority of the world's population threatens their economic and political viability. Those countries "are thus a threat to the global economic and political interests of all countries. Global health inequities undermine human security and we cannot afford to ignore them" (Brundtland 2000).

A new paradigm has emerged. It is called *new universalism*. WHO first defines new universalism by contrast with the market health paradigm and opposes it to "market-oriented approaches that ration health services according to the ability to pay" (WHO 1999e, 33). Not only do market mechanisms lead to "intolerable inequity" with respect to health as a fundamental human right but, as WHO blandly asserts, "growing bodies of theory and evidence indicate them to be inefficient as well" (p. 33). This evidence is that the very countries that have achieved high incomes and rapid economic growth through market mechanisms (and very high health outcomes) are the same countries, except the USA, that mandate universal coverage and "rely most heavily on governments to finance their health services. Therein lies a lesson." And the lesson is that "achieving high health outcomes requires a combination of universal entitlement and tight control over expenditure" (WHO 1999e, 33).

New Universalism also departs from classical universalism. Seldom implemented "in extreme form," classical universalism has "shaped" many European health systems and had governments attempt "to provide and finance everything to everybody." (WHO 1999e, 33). Too little attention was given "to people's *demand* for health care, and instead concentrated almost exclusively on their perceived *needs*" (WHO 2000b, xiii). The new universalism paradigm reflects an evolutive shift of vision in WHO policies:

Rather than all possible care for everyone, or only the simplest and most basic care for the poor, this

means delivery to all of high-quality essential care, defined mostly by criteria of effectiveness, cost and social acceptability. It implies explicit choice of priorities among interventions, respecting the ethical principle that it may be necessary and efficient to ration services, but that it is inadmissible to exclude whole groups of the population (WHO 2000b, xiii).

This is the essence of new universalism as paradigm. New universalism “recognizes governments’ limits but retains government responsibility for the leadership and finance health systems” (WHO 1999e, xv). WHO follows D. Osborn’s advice to governments to “row less and steer more” (quoted in WHO 2000b, 119). Brundtland argues that what we need is “not less government but better government” (Brundtland 2000). Ideologically the new paradigm entails greater emphasis on individual choice and responsibility. “For people to have the power to be healthy, they must be in a position to choose better health ... making the right choices ... being empowered to make the healthy choices for themselves ... freedom to do what they want, and need, to do” (Brundtland 2000). Politically it means that governments limit promises and expectations to what they can and should do. In its new form, health-for-all includes coverage for all, but excludes coverage for everything. Even the richest countries cannot provide their entire population with every desirable medical intervention. The paradigm of new universalism posits that the human and financial resources for health lie overwhelmingly within each individual country. But there are limits “on what governments can finance and on their capacity to deliver services. Hence the need for public policies that recognize these limits” (WHO 1999e, 82). The new paradigm proposes “choosing public priorities in terms of what governments will do and will not do,” and this is how “economic reality becomes an integral part of health system development and reform” (WHO 1999e, 35).

WHO in turn should support projects and policies to which governments are willing and able to commit themselves and to sustain. Rather than attempting to impose an outsider’s perspective, WHO means to select its interventions in the light of what individual countries can do for themselves and use the resources they choose to commit. It also expects that focusing on interventions most likely to improve health outcomes will provide at the same time the maximum gains in health levels and their most equitable distribution. New universalism thus holds that

the objective of good health itself is really twofold: the best attainable average level—goodness—and the smallest feasible differences among individuals and groups—fairness. Goodness means a health system responding well to what people expect of it; fairness means it responds equally well to everyone, without discrimination (WHO 2000b, xi).

To manage limited means in relation to ends is the specific purpose of economics as science. WHO’s paradigm pictures itself as realist and scientific. New universalism gathers, uses and promotes science-based knowledge. Knowledge is basic to health choices, individual choices as well as public policy decision-making. WHO’s “recommendations should be based on evidence rather than ideology” (WHO 2000b, vii).

Another realistic principle is that WHO should concentrate “on countries whose policies reflect a shared vision of reaching the poor and of efficiency in health systems development” (WHO 1999e, xvi). Willingness to cooperate is a condition to realist cooperative assistance between governments and the health agency. Experience has shown that, when external assistance supports government with sound policies, it succeeds “but when external actors pushed against the grain of weak national policies they failed” (WHO 1999e, 83). The new approach also implies cost-effectiveness and therefore a shift, wherever necessary, in the use of resources, “focusing more on interventions that we know can achieve the greatest health gain possible within prevailing resource limits” (WHO 1999e, 82). The most cost-effective services should be provided first.

The most important operational component of new universalism is “the basic assumption that in order to improve efficiency and set priorities, one needs to accurately assess the current performance of health systems” (Brundtland 2000). The performance of health systems is the major concern on which WHO now intends to focus.

According to WHO, the assessment of national health systems needs to be vertically holistic, encompassing not only the provision of public and personal health services but other key areas of public policy, that is, “all actions whose primary intent is to improve health” (WHO 2000b, vii), and horizontally holistic: all countries are concerned in the implementation of WHO’s vision of global health; all should assess their health system. In fact, “no health system exploits its resources to its full potential” (Brundtland 2000). Mistakes done in health investment have long lasting consequences and “enormous gaps” exist between the potential of health systems and actual performance (WHO 2000b, 3). Finally, there are, in most national health systems, unresolved inequities. “Even within countries with similar income levels, there are unacceptably large variations in health outcome” (WHO 2000b, xii).

WHO says the people’s general welfare is the responsibility of governments. The overall stewardship of the performance of the country’s health system always lies with national governments (see WHO 2000b, 119). Stewardship of health belongs to the irreducible core of public responsibility. “Without stewardship, market failure and the exclusion of poorer consumers from access are ever-present dangers” (WHO 2000b, 135). In operational terms, governments’ stewardship calls for their ability to identify the principal challenges at any time and to assess the options for dealing with them. Effective stewardship of health policy requires “regulatory and advocacy strategies consistent with health system goals, and the capacity to implement them cost-effectively” (WHO 2000b, 137). A wide range of options is open to governments’ choice of an adequate health system and financing HFA: general taxation, social security systems financed on salary-related contributions, mandatory insurance and private health insurance relying on premiums (WHO 2000b,108).

According to WHO’s new universalism, striking a balance between effective control of health systems by governments and the independence needed to motivate providers of health services is a delicate task. But a health system where individuals pay out of their own pocket for a substantial part of the cost of health services at the moment of seeking treatment clearly restricts access to only those who can afford it, is a system bound to lead to inequity and exclude the poor; mandatory insurance, risk pooling, and prepayment are the cornerstone of a fair health system. In fact, the new paradigm recommends the use of pluralistic strategies and multilateral

partnerships with health stakeholders.

The purpose of WHO's assessment of national health systems is not academic but practical and interactive. Focusing on health systems will permit the agency to steward national health agendas from a centrally strategic position. WHO makes three main recommendations. Governments should first retain the ultimate responsibility for the overall performance of each country's health performance. The new paradigm secondly invites governments to recognize the limits to what they can finance and to their capacity to deliver health services and the recommendation is that they should seek to diversify the sources of service provision and to select interventions that, for the resources each country chooses to commit, will "provide the maximum gains in health levels and their most equitable distribution" (WHO 1999e, 82). To ensure implementation, at government level, of the new approach, Brundtland intends to tackle the highest political level, selling the vision of health as central to development, and of the right to health as a prerequisite to all other human rights. In practical terms, the approach is "top-down" and seeks the direct involvement of national governments. Indicative of this trend is the fact that Executive Board members now directly represent their countries and speak on behalf of their governments. In the past, they served in their personal capacity.

The third recommendation is to use the well-established partnership of WHO with ministries of health for the purposes of the new universalism paradigm. The World Health Report 2000 minces no words to health ministries. Quoting T. Bossert, it says that in low and middle income countries, these ministries have earned a reputation of being among "the most bureaucratic and least effectively managed institutions in the public sector" (WHO 2000b, 120). The health ministries were fragmented in vertical programs often run, again according to Bossert, "as virtual fiefdoms, dependent on uncertain international donor funding" (p. 120): WHO notes that these problems are still familiar, "in greater or lesser degrees, in many countries today" (WHO 2000b, 120). The report claims health ministries often suffer from myopia and do not see into the future. They are inclined to promote health policy by means of legislation and issuing regulations: an easy, inexpensive, but ineffective process since they often have no capacity to monitor compliance. Strategic planning too often is marred by the unrealistic relying on public funding of health care. Also mentioned is their inability to adjust to advances in knowledge and technology.

WHO's catalogue of ministries' failures bolsters the claim that reform is urgently needed and justifies intervention. WHO's focusing on the improvement of national health systems could turn to be a decisive turning point in global health governance. The threatening implication of this approach is that, through expertise, exercise of normative powers (mandatory or acquired by persuasion, infusion, imbibition, and other covert mechanisms), WHO can bypass governmental authority, lack transparency and accountability, and so devolve for its own benefit a power of stewardship that properly belongs to the democratic process. It is up to national governments to react or submit to this process, to accept to for themselves and to impose it to others or not.

The continued entanglement of WHO in ideological globalization contradicts the trend of global health governance toward economic realism. The integration of health in the ideological human rights paradigm is the root-cause of this entanglement. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the "right to health"

has never been explicitly defined in the provisions of international human rights instruments. The right to health has not been “adequately translated into special claims on available resources, nor did health status become the test of social and economic development” (WHO 1998b). WHO is working to reverse that trend. WHO is still fully committed to continue working on the task of giving substance to the right to health. New universalism thus remains entangled in the process of strengthening legal capacity for the operationalization of the right to health. In the new policy, health is not only a fundamental human right but a prerequisite for the full enjoyment of all other human rights.

Like all UN agencies, WHO demands universal ratification and implementation of existing national and international human rights instruments. WHO also demands regulations and much stronger health legislation. Mastering the so-called tobacco epidemic, protection of child labor, women’s issues, access to health services, travel and health regulations form a huge unchartered area where there is little or no legal capacity. WHO considers as one of its priorities to ensure that international law developments are integrated and coordinated within the framework of national legislation, particularly legal doctrine and jurisprudence favorable to the enlargement of the right to health. WHO intends to intensify its input in the work of the UN human rights treaty monitoring bodies. In addition, the agency will contribute to developing tools and methodologies to enable states to assess and monitor their respective health and human rights performance. To sum up, WHO deems essential to build in the coming decades “an international legal capacity within the organization and establish networks of experts, in order to create an ‘epistemic community’ of international health law,” that is, a system of intellectually coherent doctrine that can be articulated in legal and operational norms (WHO 1998e).

WHO’s claim to leadership is based, not on a democratic mandate, but on the pseudo-economic assumption that health is the “key to reversing the downward spiral linking poverty, malnutrition and environmental degradation.” It should “be placed firmly centre-stage.” Brundtland seeks to “unleash a global social movement for health and the role of health in development” (Brundtland 1999a). The renewed emphasis on partnerships has resulted in two curious developments.

The first concerns the nature and scope of the so-called private sector. WHO includes as *natural partners* doctors, hospitals, producers of health services, private health insurance, medical schools, and professional organizations in the private sector of health. The question is again whether the private sector includes business organizations as natural partners in human development or whether they are to be classified in a special category, excluded from civil society, and continue to be subjected to ideological abuse. On the one hand, there is no doubt that the new WHO’s policy defines the basic role of the health agency as one of guidance or stewardship of all partners involved in health-for-all, including the market. On the other, ideological exclusion continues while some form of pragmatic compromise between WHO and the market now is on WHO’s agenda as explained earlier. This proffered partnership is limited and conditioned by the willingness of governments, corporations, and other private health stakeholders to identify with the health revolution, that is, to submit to WHO’s governance and values. New universalism stipulates that the partners’ willingness to cooperate is a component of its realistic approach to cooperation.

Willingness to cooperate is an implosive and ambivalent concept that can be used, openly or covertly, to exclude from cooperative action not only the countries or people who most need assistance, but also those in the private sector who can best contribute to global development. The question thus is: Why should any nation or group be foreclosed on their democratic rights for failure to honor the ideological pretensions of the UN Leviathan? The only realistic way out of this dilemma is that WHO admit that dogmatic radicalism in any form is wrong and that it drop its exclusionary agenda. As things stands now, it is unlikely that it will do so. How WHO will extricate itself from its own shibboleths is still unclear, but the moral exclusion from the global agenda of natural relationships, family, enterprise, government, traditions, religion, and cultural identity is an inner and useless contradiction that WHO cannot afford to ignore.

The second development is even more surprising. In the ideology of WHO's paradigm, sectoriality still remains anathema, but promoting the health sector development is one of the declared WHO's strategic objectives. The very concept of partnership implies division of labor, focusing not only on specific health outcomes and cost-effectiveness in the management of health resources, but on the recognition that each partner (indeed, WHO itself in the health sector) has a well-defined function or task to perform.

Here again, there is an implicit contradiction: WHO aggrandizes its own identity as global leader, reduces that of its partners, particularly governments and the private sector, to lambaste their claim to sovereignty. It insists on its leadership rights and on the latter's responsibility to implement the health agency's enlightened norms and programs. In a speech at the opening of the 26th annual conference of the global health council in Arlington, Virginia, on June 21, 1999, Brundtland called for a "global link-up of all partners working in the field of international development and in public health" (Brundtland 1999a). She announced that WHO is now ready to join the UNDG to create a common development programme for the UN system at large. WHO is now "linking up with key partners such as UNICEF, the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation and industry to strengthen a Global Coalition in the field of immunization" (Brundtland 1999a). In another instance of interagency cooperation, WHO is promoting with the International Labour Organization (ILO) occupational health that is both ethically correct and economically sound, which stipulates that higher productivity and cost-effectiveness go hand in hand with considerations of health and safety at work. Another example of coordinating, streamlining, and strengthening the work with sister organizations is WHO's partnership with the food organizations (FAO - IFAD - WFP). The health agency thus becomes a little UN inside the global community of nations. Brundtland places the health sector at the center of the development agenda:

It is one reason why I have launched a project under the title of Partnerships for Health Sector Development. The project will be working to advance our strategic agenda on several fronts. It will work throughout the Organization to establish a health sector development perspective in all aspects of our work. It will also be concerned to help to develop a more strategic approach to work with countries. In addition, the project will have a role in establishing more influential partnerships (WHO 1999e, xv).

WHO reminds states of their duties, particularly that of promoting the right to health by adequate legislation. WHO's legal capacity is to be constantly increased in each individual country by jurisprudence. In each case principles of common law and jurisprudence will be applied and a consistent body of health rights law will emerge. WHO is now focusing on developing indicators and guidelines for countries on how to report on the right to health. These indicators will analyze health information by social class, sex, age, and geography. WHO's assumption is that inequities will thus become clear. The agency's goal is to focus resources on the neediest and address the unfair benefits of globalization. WHO will strengthen its cooperation with the treaty bodies, clarify what is meant by the right to health and what it implies for signatory states and for the private sector. Yet a formal and positive recognition of national sovereignty and the identity of the market as specific and essential sectors of human development, are not integrated in the health paradigm. But no partnership makes sense if the specific identity of each sector of development is not recognized, first by itself and next by its partners.

The health agency obsessively seeks to institutionalize the gains of the health revolution but insists on the others' failures and violations of rights, and not on their positive achievements. Despite its profuse discourse on rights, both individual and group rights, the system fails to integrate the right of individual nations and business enterprises to be themselves. It identifies with the pessimistic globalization of constitutional order in terms of power shared between the "prince," the merchants, and civil society. WHO's approach to government and the market is penal, not civil: it says what they should not do, and not what they are by nature. The resulting view of national sovereignty is negative; it speaks exclusively of power relationships and disregards the will and capacity of a democratic society to be itself and to uphold its own identity and values. Yet WHO is an organization of sovereign member states. Member-states make all decisions at the annual meeting of the World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva. These decisions are non-binding recommendations but also political decisions which should be subject, in each state, to democratic advice and consent. WHO in practice reverses the constitutional structure of WHA. When WHA rubber-stamps its paradigms and policies, WHO claims to have received a mandate that legitimizes its activities and obliges governments to implement its norms and decisions; it shows impatience toward their lack of operational commitment to implement its ideological agenda. In her acceptance speech, Brundtland presses them to dynamic action. Governments are told from the UN pulpit "to practice what they preach from this rostrum" (Brundtland 1998). WHO's new universalism now insists on the need for national health stewardship, and reminds governments of their task of setting public health policy, creating an appropriate regulatory environment and financing their health programs and activities within the limits of what they can do (WHO 2000b, 119).

New universalism is WHO's newest paradigm that redefines the relationship between the health agency and national governments. For itself, WHO takes a stance of modesty and professed realism. Its present ambition is not to devise wonders, but just "to make a difference." In the agency's semantics, the concept of *governance* is being quietly replaced by the seemingly more benign concept of *stewardship*. WHO

formally recognizes that it is not a donor agency and that its prime resources are knowledge and peoples, not political power nor large amounts to spend. It is not certain that WHO's self-deprecating stance signals a will to reduce its claim to global leadership. Governments should not take a low profile but stand up and create a national debate on these issues.

The sovereignty of the member states as defined in the UN charter and in WHO's constitution has been eroded by a weakening of national power in two directions: downward to NGOs; upward to international institutions. During the past decade and in the critical sectors of human rights, public health and education, governments have been submissive to opinion, passively accepting to be circumvented by leftist militants and a new generation of enlightened despots. They often ended up implementing the vision elaborated by "civil society" in conjunction with the UN. The time has come for governments to stop drifting and to steer more.

The demise of sovereignty and the lack of will resulting from an absence of national purpose are indicators of demoralization and societal decadence. It is wrong to assume that civil society and global governance win when national governance loses. Far from justifying a devolution of executive and judicial powers to the institutions of global governance, the decline of democratic processes and values undermines not only the legitimacy of the UN system but also the operationalization of its objectives. Particularly in the sectors of development, poverty, and HFA, the structural weakness of government is the principal obstacle to progress. To recognize that government is the basic structure of national society and international order leads to the inference that the UN system promotes its own destruction if it builds on the sand of radical idealism and wilfully deconstructs the interactive sovereignty of states. It is a delusion to construct a new system on foundations other than the values and institutions of democratic commonalty. UN aggrandizement cannot thrive on a complacent acceptance of democratic dysfunctioning. It is true that the sovereignty of the member states as defined in WHO's constitution has been eroded by changes in the national and global political process. But if the states lack democratic and moral authority over their own people, so does the WHA, so does WHO. The UN partners, however, interpret the growing dysfunction of democratic governance.

What WHO actually contributes to development should be evaluated against what the market achieves by economic growth. The awareness of this gross imbalance should facilitate the shift from globalism and idealist posturing back to realism and constitutional legitimacy. A similar imbalance exists between the health agency's sphere of operation and the vast areas of private health care (doctors, hospitals, medical schools, and research). There have been, in the past century, very remarkable gains in health, unprecedented economic growth, exponential scientific advance. Life expectancy and access to health care have increased dramatically. Deadly diseases have been gradually conquered. WHO's achievements should not be minimized. Nor should we underestimate the negative outcomes that are directly or indirectly related to the implementation of the UN paradigms. A demographic crisis already looms as the certain legacy of the demographic transition. Youth lifestyles hurt their chances of achieving happiness. Divorce bears isolation and depression. Single-parent households are often destitute. And the system, being stuck in ideology, gives short shrift to the real situation of the developing countries where the issue of poverty is indeed crucial, but cannot

be cured by declaratory leadership, norms, and unending sociological analysis of root causes.

To take away from WHO the status of demiurge it has acquired in the past decade, the leading member states must move out of passive appeasement of UN radicalism and create a new situation by means of three simple steps that are as feasible as they are overdue. The health agency should first be asked to submit a consolidated balance sheet of its achievements and an executive summary of its objectives. This presentation should make it possible to separate achievement from mere talk and, in a single readable picture, give an overview of the health sector to cover activities related to health in all agencies (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, and others). As a second step, it would then become feasible for the sovereign member states to redefine their mandate to these agencies. The immediate consequence of this clarification will be that member states will be induced to re-establish their constitutional grip over their health policy and to reinvent the WHA as the constitutional link between the health agency and national governments.

Thirdly, member states must regain their sovereign function, not as partners of the UN system but as mutual partners freely acting together to promote development and peace. Disentanglement from UN globalization will restore the role of bilateral relationships in foreign policy, in health, development, assistance to countries in need of outside help, security and global solidarity. The starting point of this process needs to be a declaration of will and purpose to restore bilateral international relations and to be cowed no longer by the new Leviathan.

Disentanglement from leftist idealism will make it possible to address the dilemma that presently tears apart private medicine and public policy. In the human condition, there is a natural order of priority (*prima mangiare, dopo filosofare*—food before philosophy) as there is an order of value. Health is not an end in itself and, in the order of value, occupies a lower place than the pursuit of happiness. The blind eye of hedonism sees neither that the mere pursuit of pleasure leads to personal deadlock nor that genuine happiness always requires a measure of selflessness. Riskless existence and easy lifestyles foreclose noble achievements. Trailblazers take risks. Authors and entrepreneurs go bankrupt. Football players get hurt. The paradigm describes well-being as an absolute as if human dignity were not an attribute of people in bad health, poor, refugees, and handicapped: a viewpoint leading to eugenics and the denial of life to children who cannot meet materialistic criteria of normal, utilitarian lifestyles, and who are aborted, presumably in their own interest.

Who will ever be in a state of total physical, social, mental, and spiritual well-being? Obviously, the more holistic the health paradigm becomes, the more demand for health care is stimulated, the more people's entitlements to health increase, and the more difficult it becomes to implement the health for all strategy. The diversion of scarce wealth dollars and medical expertise into pseudo-therapeutical activities implied in quality of life instruments and integration at the expense of the genuine medical care people want makes little sense. In developing countries, holism, the idealistic emphasis on vision, commitment, and leadership, paradigms to lead people out of poverty and worry on the cost of environmental protection are not sustainable priorities. The relevance of societal agitation, however well-meant, pales into insignificance in view of the need for primary health care.

Education Reform

The constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines its main objective as contributing

to peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science and culture in order to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language and religion, by the Charter of the United Nations.

The UNESCO mandate places the Charter of the United Nations and its values over and above differences due to race, gender and religion. It proclaims its dynamic, global purpose to achieve peace and consensus among nations through enlightenment.

As health-for-all is WHO's global strategic objective and primary health care its working concept, UNESCO relates education for all and basic education in a similar logic. The director-general of the organization, Koïchiro Matsuura, appointed November 1999, said that he is "determined to make basic education an absolute priority" during his term. Education is "universally understood to be the key to all development: individual development, social development, sustainable economic development" (Matsuura 2000). Education is "the force of the future," according to Gustavo Lopez Ospina, director, UNESCO Transdisciplinary Project (Peeters 1999c). Just as the new paradigm no longer considers growth or health as ends in themselves, so is education no longer an end but a means to pursue sustainable human development, alleviate poverty, build peace, achieve quality of life for all, stabilize population, and fundamentally change attitudes and life styles. Like everything else in the limitless new paradigm, education reform is therefore declared to be first on the order of importance and urgency.

As a standard-setting agency in the field of education, UNESCO produces the norms and concepts that structure the education revolution. UNESCO's recommendations to member states are adopted by UNESCO's General Conference (an intergovernmental body) by a simple majority (the United States is no longer a member of UNESCO's General Conference). Through its recommendations, the general conference "formulates principles and norms for the international regulation of any particular question and invites Member States to take whatever legislative or other steps may be required in conformity with the constitutional practice of each State." According to UNESCO, the adoption of these recommendations by the general conference "entails obligations even for those Member States that neither voted for it, nor approved it" (UNESCO 2000a). The recommendations of the general conference have the same formal authority as the recommendations of the UN General Assembly. To supplement what is lacking to its legal enforcement capacity, UNESCO resorts to the mechanisms and tactics of global governance.

Following the pattern established by the new paradigm, UNESCO's mandate has been dramatically

enlarged in the past decade. Education for human rights, sustainable development, gender equity, health security, participation, governance, consensus-building techniques, global citizenship, peace, and the new values are all now covered by the agency's mandate. The 1990 Jomtien Conference on Education for All had already broadened the scope of basic education to include early childhood development, primary education, nonformal learning for youths and adults, and learning conveyed through the media and social action. Education now concerns not only children, but all citizens (boys and girls, children, youths and adults, indigenous and Western). Jomtien also recommended countering illiteracy, raising the general level of education, reducing gender inequity, stepping up training and human resource development, and improving curriculum quality and relevance. Obviously, this enlarged vision of education could not be realized without broad-based partnerships. The enlargement of education through horizontal globalization was credited with boundless vertical characteristics and outcomes: "a positive impact on health, productivity, protection of the environment, family planning and child care." Education is now meant to become "a key factor to transform the cultural, social and economic life of people and communities" (UNESCO 1999b). This description of the new parameters of educational reform is so abstract that it would deserve to be considered as useless mush if it did not serve as operational platform for a revolution in public education that has indeed taken place.

An *International Consultative Forum on Education for All* (EFA Forum) was set up—by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, the World Bank, and UNESCO—as a watchdog to monitor progress toward the goals of Jomtien and also to stimulate the formation of partnerships for EFA. According to UNESCO, many countries responded to Jomtien by setting up national EFA teams to develop national plans of action.

The forum held a mid-decade meeting in Amman, Jordan, in 1996 to review progress. Occurring after the consensus-building process of the global conferences, Amman thus integrated the new vision and allowed for a reinterpretation of Jomtien.

In April 2000 a *World Education Forum* was held in Dakar, Senegal, to discuss the findings of the *Education for All 2000 Assessment* conducted in more than 180 countries—the largest evaluation ever in the field of education. In this assessment countries were guided by a UN technical advisory group. Dakar also had operational and strategic goals: to operationalize the vision of Jomtien, to consolidate partnerships (further build global governance), and to demonstrate clear commitments. A new framework for action was adopted in April 2000—the *Dakar Framework for Action*, an agenda for education in the twenty-first century, representing a "collective commitment to action" and stating that "governments have an obligation to ensure that EFA goals and targets are reached and sustained" (UNESCO 2000c, 8). The Dakar agenda requested all states to develop—in partnership with all stakeholders—their national plans of action by 2002, at the latest. As in health for all, the focus of education for all is on equitable access to learning, gender equity, and the quality of life.

The platforms for action of the global conferences all addressed the paramount role of education in the new paradigm and thereby emphasized UNESCO's comparative advantage in education in the implementation of sustainable development. How has UNESCO built its own capacity to fulfil its new mandate? At the 1992 Rio conference, governments recognized that environmental problems must be

addressed within sociocultural contexts. Rio mandated UNESCO to be the task manager for the education component of Agenda 21. New arrangements were set in place immediately after Rio to mobilize UNESCO's resources for follow-up. In preparation for the Cairo conference, and as a result of UNESCO's analysis of Jomtien, Rio, and Vienna, a *Transdisciplinary and Interagency Cooperation Project on Environment and Population, Education and Information for Development* (now called *Educate for a Sustainable Future*) was launched in 1994.

The 1996 report of the independent *International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century* (established by UNESCO and chaired by Jacques Delors, former president of the European Union), formulated a global education policy that incorporated education for sustainable development. It differed in important ways from what had gone before.

For fifty years, the structure of UNESCO had covered four main areas: education, culture, natural sciences, and communication. These areas were conceived and approached as autonomous. Now UNESCO is aware that focusing on the priorities of the global conferences requires an interdisciplinary approach.

The general conference of UNESCO determined that it was necessary to “change the mentality of UNESCO,” and “to create a new way of looking at reality” by shifting from a sectoral view to an integrated one (Peeters 1999c). The adoption of a transdisciplinary approach by UNESCO reflects a will to change its own way of thinking. It has led the agency to make a transconference reading of global conferences—a conceptual work deemed necessary to move forward in the implementation of the new consensus and that, in UNESCO's view, no other UN body has so far achieved. The objective is to arrive at a single and coherent message. Supposedly, the process will help clarify the core content of the agenda in the new paradigm and facilitate its implementation.

The transconference reading thus led to a transdisciplinary strategy which opens UNESCO to areas that do not traditionally belong to its mandate, such as health and the environment. It calls for a better collaboration and coordination with other UN agencies.

The Characteristics of Holistic Education

UNESCO's educational revolution integrates the general characteristics of the new paradigm, in particular holism and participation. While science tends to develop specialties (sectorality), culture and education tend to humanism and the enjoyment of a sedate and universal worldview (holism). The new *Weltanschauung*, as we now know, is sustainable development. In the past, one worked hard and systematically at developing specialties. Research, particularly in the universities, has devoted itself to unidimensional goals in narrow but deep branches of study. The theory of UNESCO's educational revolution is that specialization has atomized the various elements of human knowledge. UNESCO deprecates traditional models not only for being sectoral but also simplistic. Specialties must now be integrated in the framework of sustainability to restore a holistic view of reality. The new educational paradigm defines simplism not as a lack of scientific precision but as the practice of ignoring complexity and concludes that only an integrated way of thinking permits the scholar and the policy-maker to grasp reality in its real complexity—in fact, the complexity of sustainability as a paradigm. If issues are complex, then education must be holistic and UNESCO must adopt a globally normative

interdisciplinary approach.

The interdisciplinary approach allegedly permits mobilization of all available resources at the right moment and at the right place. Education reform itself must be considered as a whole. It should not merely adjust or add on “separate new components to existing curricula.” Throughout education, “one must be concerned with this global vision so that the person may progress from one year to the next in a holistic way, understanding the global world as well as the local world” (Peeters 1999c).

UNESCO’s main challenge, then, is to develop an interdisciplinary conceptual framework that reflects the complexity of sustainable development: a task not easier than implementing health for all. The claim that the vision of the new educational paradigm leads to the mobilization of all available forces, for holistic human development, at the right moment at the right place, is idealistic. Contrary to what is claimed, many young men and women experience difficulties to manage the transition from school to work. More fundamentally, the new educational paradigm confuses culture and the implementation of the interdisciplinary approach. Just as human fulfilment may not be reduced to health and physical well-being, it is simplistic to identify humanism—the outcome of genuinely holistic education—to cramming in basic education the ideological concerns of the Global New Left. The evidence is that the new paradigm pursues a new form of humanism that conforms to new values and should lead to a new way of life and ultimately to a new, global culture.

To achieve its goals, the education paradigm advocates dynamic partnerships between formal, informal, and nonformal education. In the new paradigm education is no longer merely schooling (that is, formal education focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and job skills), but also informal and nonformal education. Informal education is given through the family, peers, friends, and the media. Nonformal education corresponds to organized educational activity outside the established formal system (for example, the Boy Scouts of America).

There are two problems with the enlargement of the concept of education. First, valuing and developing informal and nonformal education indirectly degrades formal education; second, the new direct partnership of UNESCO with nonformal and informal education entities allows the agency to inculcate its global norms in domains traditionally private and reserved to family and personal relations.

It follows from this enlargement that changes in educational systems are not, in the new paradigm, the task of ministries of education alone. The changes will require the concerted effort of all sectors of society. This is what the Dakar framework calls *educational governance*. Dakar recommends the systematic and direct participation of civil society in national EFA forums. To achieve the new objectives and to enhance informal education, UNESCO has developed flexible relationships with many partners: teacher unions, institutes, individual experts, youth associations, the private sector, religious groups, governments, NGOs, and the media. Informal consultation with all education partners permits UNESCO to coordinate quietly the implementation of a global education policy. UNESCO, an intergovernmental agency, thereby overreaches its mandate by using it outside of its legitimate sphere of influence limited to governments, to work with NGOs and other actors of global civil society.

Under the leadership of the education agency and its partners, education has become a participatory process meant to *produce* the young citizens of the global participatory democracy of the future. Every government, private enterprise, media, individual is not only a partner in education, but every act they each perform every day is educational: this is the position of UNESCO. Culture is the sum total of all acts in fulfilment of the roles that each has in the community. It is the fundamental form of education. The new culture will come about only if we all internalize the values of the new paradigm and act on them.

Verticality is therefore the most important of the characteristics of educational holism. The most influential educational partnerships are those that concern changes in mental habits and attitudes. The obligation of all citizens is to assume the responsibility of educating their fellow citizens. Education “not only activates the mind and imagination but also teaches the conscience, constantly reminding us of our obligations to one another” (UNESCO 1999a, 5). Just as the new paradigm moves from growth to sustainable development, and from individual physical health to health as societal well-being, so education is now about culture very broadly construed and social engineering. Its goal is a new humanism. Education reform is crucial to the formation of the new culture and to the adoption of the new ethic of rights and responsibilities. UNESCO’s task is no less than to “change the way people think today in the world” (Peeters 1999c).

The Contents of the Education Paradigm

Normative, explicit UNESCO documents, such as *The Teachers’ Role in Implementing ICPD—Teachers and Population Education*, issued in 1996, are useful in understanding the contents of the education paradigm. This document concerns “population education”—education geared toward the achievement of global population stabilization as quickly as possible. In fact, Cairo was more influential on education than Jomtien because it was *people-centered*, meaning that it demanded people’s participation in the realization of a collective agenda. Population education therefore became paradigmatic in education reform. The author of the UNESCO document, M. L. Samman, asserts that the Cairo program of action offered “a widened view of the role of education” and emphasized “its importance in the total development process” (Samman 1996, 4).

Population education is not only a process but a thematic objective of educational reform, defining its meaning as well as its significance in global social change. Just as rights education engenders a rights culture and peace education, a culture of peace, population education must bring about a *population culture*. UNESCO insists population education must be integrated in other disciplines such as geography, sociology, or economics and, through this integration, determine what is to be taught in each branch. This revolution cannot be achieved without an educational transition. As there is a demographic transition (ending in demographic crisis) and a health transition, educational reform pretends to achieve the change from traditional education to its universal and definitive form. As in every revolution, there is a claim to universality and definitiveness.

The contents of the core curriculum of population education divide into four main categories: economic and social development, with an emphasis on social demography; environment and ecosystems, dealing in particular with the interrelation between population and the environment; sexuality and personal self-fulfilment; and family well-being, with an emphasis on the family structure and the role of family

members. Population education has used new teaching methods that have spread to other domains, including human rights education or health education: awareness raising, participation, role playing, coordinated training programs, a wide range of partnerships and strategies, networking, the organization of events, and, last but not least, the monitoring of implementation by trained population education experts. Staff must themselves receive population education in one way or another (short-term training) to “imbibe them with population culture” (Samman 1996, 8).

Population education cannot be restricted to formal education. Taking gender equity education as an example, UNICEF recognizes that it

is not enough to say “there shouldn’t be any discrimination against women” because discrimination is learned from childhood. If we are going to change attitudes, it means that we have to begin with families, with the school system and the communities in order to bring about a non-discriminatory, a non-violent approach to relationships, based on respect, on supporting complementarities. We have to build all this in our school curriculum, and there is collaboration in this among the various agencies (Peeters 1996a; quoting Misrak Elias).

Education is thus an unending and global process achieved in synergic partnerships.

Health education is another component of the health revolution. The 1986 *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion* and the 1997 *Jakarta Declaration on Leading Health Promotion into the Twenty-first Century* structured health education and promotion. According to WHO’s *Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion*, *health promotion* is “the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health.” In other words, people must “own” their health. They must be empowered to “take control of those things which determine their health, their resources, and their physical capacities.” Individuals and groups must learn to “identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs, and to change or cope with the environment” (WHO 1999g). Jakarta focused on creating sustainable health promotion programs and provided international direction and coordination for health education. This people-centered trend is further developed in WHO’s *World Health Report 2000*, shifting attention to people’s demand for health care rather than on their “presumed needs” (WHO, 2000b, 15).

As the Global New Left sees it, health education is not the responsibility of the health sector alone. Health promotion goes beyond health care. We are all health educators and *global citizens*. Furthermore, prerequisites for health, such as peace, shelter, food, education, income, a stable eco-system, social justice, equity, sustainable resources, depend on the global environment. They are beyond the control of health owners and demand a global commitment. Last, equity in health—reducing differences in health status—is another collective goal that must be achieved in education as in any sector of global governance.

The new educational paradigm is a dynamic configuration of human rights, health, and education. Institutionally, an alliance for development exists between WHO and UNESCO. In 1991 WHO, UNICEF, and UNESCO convened a consultation of experts to reach a common understanding of holistic school health

education. In partnership with UNESCO, WHO launched a global school health initiative. The health and education sectors could no longer work in isolation. At first, the priority of the school health initiative was HIV/AIDS prevention. Included in the priority was the prevention of discrimination against AIDS-infected students and teachers (the rights approach). Concretely, HIV/AIDS prevention as a priority soon translated into reproductive health (population education). The integration of health and education led from prevention of sexually transmitted diseases to the promotion of comprehensive sex education programs under the name of “health education.”

UNAIDS—the interagency UN program on AIDS—naturally joined as partner. So did *Education International*, the largest umbrella teachers’ union in the world. The outcome of the school health initiative depends on the formation of partnerships at international, national, and local levels. The list of potential partners is long and open. It includes health and education ministries, supranational organizations such as the European Commission and UN agencies, teachers, community leaders organizations, and local communities.

Life skills education in schools is part of this pattern. WHO defines life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior, that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.” The formal school curriculum for all grades should include life skills. The aim is the healthy psychosocial development of the child. Children and adolescents need to master a core set of skills: decision making, creative thinking, effective communication, self-awareness and self-esteem, coping with emotions, problem solving, critical thinking, interpersonal relationship skills, empathy, and coping with stress. Life skills education must use active, dynamic learning processes such as brainstorming, role playing, games, debates, and work in small groups. Through these new techniques, children could learn “to deal assertively with peer pressure” and promote self-confidence. WHO’s thesis is that life skills education has proved its effectiveness in areas such as “the prevention of substance abuse, adolescent pregnancy, prevention of bullying” (WHO, 1999f). Programs to prevent HIV/AIDS belong to this agenda.

Life skills education illustrates the people-centered shift from imposition to ownership. It can very easily be used, however, for social engineering and educating youths to the values of the Global New Left. These values stem from an impoverished anthropological vision. WHO seems to reduce human specificity to the “power of mental functioning.” Its comments about psychosocial development in early childhood sheds light on the anthropological vision of the UN system:

What sets human beings apart from other members of the animal kingdom is their power of mental functioning. It is strange therefore that the mental health and development of babies is not given the same attention as physical health and development.... As infant mortality rates decrease and we become more and more concerned about quality of life, more and more attention must be given to the mental development (WHO 1999h)

in infancy. Implicit is the need to integrate the psychosocial development of infants into holistic education.

Educating to act is a major component of the reform program. The values of the new paradigm must be

integrated into the personality of those educated, particularly children and teenagers. The objective of education is “ownership” of these values. In the new education paradigm, the emphasis is on *practicing* and no longer on passive learning. The educational transition concerns shifting from educating to know to education to act, from awareness to responsibility. All should take responsibility for their own values and acts. When the student internalizes and owns the new values, he becomes “the manager of his own life rather than the object of outside forces” (Samman 1996, 2).

As an example, UNESCO defines population education as “concrete education in responsibility” (Samman 1996, 4). Education reform is designed to provide students with knowledge that “would enable them to take informed and responsible decisions on health, sexual and reproductive behaviour, family life and inter-generation relations, modes of production and consumption” (p. 4). Education should be practical and aim at “the acquisition of abilities for understanding in order to act” (p. 6). Learning to live together (according to the norms of the new social contract), women, men, and students become agents of social change. The final outcome of the process is social transformation.

As a consequence, the traditional role of teachers has been revolutionized. According to Samman, the new educational paradigm operationalizes a transition from distant teachers who were concerned “only about transmitting knowledge” to teachers who are willing to care for the intellectual, physical, social, and psychic development of their students. Teachers now have a holistic role. They are no longer specialists in certain disciplines. Samman says that “teachers who put population education into practice are educators in the broadest sense” (Samman, 1996, 6) because population education requires addressing all aspects of the individual. The reform thus entails the imperative of another transition: from teachers once trained to teachers willing to update and perfect their training with the extra knowledge needed for the implementation of the holistic paradigm.

The relationship between teachers and learners will change into a relationship between citizens (global citizens). Teachers are to act as “citizens moving in the same society as their pupils” (Samman 1996, 6). Teachers and students are *equal citizens*, and their relationship must be determined by this fundamental equality. The relationship between teachers and students will therefore not be ruled by authority as in the past but by individual rights: students have rights, and they can exercise them against teachers. Another aspect, specific to population education, is that teachers should rid themselves of “unspoken fears regarding a side of education which entails tackling sensitive or controversial issues” (p. 6). Teachers and students alike will then feel at ease and work in an atmosphere of mutual confidence. The young especially must be able to “frankly express their inner thoughts and opinions without fear of disapproval or rejection” (p. 9). Learners were once confined to a passive role by stable and enduring educational frameworks. They are now required to question actively and to interpret their own experience of living and “devise strategies for overcoming the difficulties encountered” (p. 7). They are asked to evaluate their own approaches and achievements, and forge a sense of responsibility for work done well. Teachers need to be trained in “evaluation,” “one of their most essential tasks” (p. 7), and to be able to use indicators. Traditional testing, too, is to be replaced by new evaluation methods.

Peer assessment is another component of the new educational agenda. As teachers will themselves be taught by education experts, preferably trained by population educators, students will pass on the results of their experiences in and out of school to parents and others. The relations with peers is to follow the same line. The agenda foresees a transition from peer pressure to peer assessment: peer pressure must be transformed into a constructive assessment by peers of progress in responsible behavior. The new approach includes training in the use of “new techniques of inter-personal communication and counselling, organizing and working in a group with parents, health personnel or social workers” (Samman 1996, 8). The population educator is thus challenged to become the partner of parents.

In a practical way, population education shifts from traditional value systems (seen as an imposition) to a *clarification of values* (seen as people-centered). The teacher must become “conscious of his own code of ethics and values, but is open-minded and tolerant regarding other values, attitudes, beliefs and behavior.” The teacher owns the reform agenda as his own system of values. Likewise, students are challenged to make and possess their self-made value system. Thus understood, tolerance is a vital component of the teacher-student relationships and of the teacher’s role. As a facilitator, the teacher must become an awareness raiser. The principle of tolerance is moving from tolerating other people’s value systems to altogether accepting and internalizing them proactively. Another transition is in process from learning about the past to acquiring the “ability to foresee and plan for the future,” acquiring “the habit of thinking ahead, for the purpose of controlling the events in one’s life and directing one’s own behavior, including sexual, family or reproductive behavior” (Samman 1996, 7).

In 1995, the UN had launched a *Decade for Human Rights Education* (1995–2004) in view of creating a universal culture of human rights. It has passed its midpoint and its achievements were evaluated in a report by the office of Mary Robinson, who called them “disappointing” (Robinson 2000a).

The two main UN partners for the decade are the high commissioner for human rights (UNHCHR) and UNESCO. The UNHCHR is responsible for coordinating the implementation and for setting direction and policy of human rights education while UNESCO is to focus on “the design, implementation and evaluation of projects under the Plan of Action” (UN General Assembly 1996b). The plan is, once again, built on the idea of broad partnerships with national governments, international organizations, NGOs, professional associations and individuals. The “active engagement” of NGOs is of course a “crucial element for success” (UN General Assembly 1996a).

The secretary general’s action plan requires each member-state to draw up a national plan of action for human rights education. The year 2004 is the target date for achieving human rights education programs through member-state implementation of action plans, in line with the general UN policy to coordinate and strengthen international, national, and local partnerships in the promotion of human rights. The same year is the target date for the completion and distribution to member-states of materials in this area. Effective national capacities for the delivery of human rights education should be established by that date. In 1997, UNESCO broadly disseminated the Universal Declaration in schools; in 1998, the education agency disseminated guidelines for national plans of action, and in 2000 it operated a global survey on materials, organizations and

programs in human rights education.

Mary Robinson's mid-term global evaluation of the progress made towards the realization of the goals of the decade highlights the imbalance between what governments have achieved on the one hand and the work done by NGOs and international organizations on the other. For example in the Americas, only four governments out of 35 responded extensively to UNHCHR's questionnaire, while 21 out of 44 NGOs responded. "Very few Governments in the region have established national committees for human rights education," notes Robinson, while "most activities for human rights education are organized by non-governmental organizations and academic institutions." She deplores lack of political will, the inability of governments to work in partnerships, lack of understanding of human rights and claims that "broad human rights awareness campaigns ... are needed throughout the region." She recommends the creation of evaluation tools, "including indicators to measure impact at the quantitative and qualitative levels." In addition and more surprisingly, the UN itself has not yet adopted a "system-wide response to the Decade" (Robinson, 2000b).

The UN system wants local and community-based groups to deliver a popular style of human rights education and to reach out to professional groups for training of trainers.

Consideration should be given to preparing practitioners in the relevant field to deliver human rights education, be they lawyers, judges or police officers. Much more can be accomplished through the collegial approach of, for example, police discussing with police, than could be gained by a professor-student model of training. (UN General Assembly 1996)

Teaching activities should focus "more on the standards directly relevant to the daily work . . . in the community . . . and less on distant theoretical notions." The program should include

exercises designed to sensitize trainees to their own potential for violative behaviour, however unwitting. . . . Trainees should be made to understand, for example, that the term "degrading treatment," as found in the various international instruments, may have different practical implications when applied to women as compared to men, or when applied to one cultural group vis-à-vis another. (UN General Assembly 1996)

According to the UN action plan, human rights education involves social, economic, cultural, and political factors and is meant to support participatory democracy and people-centered sustainable development. Along with combating stereotypes, the education plan emphasizes positive attitudes of students.

In the secretary-general's plan, human rights education focuses on building "a universal culture of human rights," not only by the imparting of knowledge and skills but primarily through "the moulding of attitudes." The aims are

the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, the promotion of

understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all nations, indigenous peoples and racial, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, the enabling of all persons to participate effectively in a free society, the furtherance of the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (UN General Assembly 1996).

Priority must be given to “ women, children, the aged, minorities, refugees, indigenous peoples, persons in extreme poverty, persons with HIV infection or AIDS and other vulnerable groups.” Target groups include

police, prison officials, lawyers, judges, teachers and curriculum developers, the armed forces, international civil servants, development officers and peacekeepers, non-governmental organizations, the media, government officials, parliamentarians and other groups that are in a particular position to effect the realization of human rights (UN General Assembly 1996).

Human rights education is essentially a holistic socialization process. Going beyond traditional education and relying principally on informal education mechanisms, the process will achieve its final outcome when human rights values become “integrated throughout society”—a grandiose plan that does not seem to take off (UN General Assembly 1996).

An example of partnerships in human rights education may be found in the *Peace Resource Center*, a grass-roots education initiative aiming at providing a “universally accepted human rights values framework.” The *Peace Resources Center* has a program entitled *Partners in Human Rights Education*, designed to introduce international human rights and responsibilities to students of all age. The main goal is to link learning to action, human rights to “practicing human responsibilities in the community through action projects” (Peace Resource Center, Undated).

The program uses interactive teaching methods to encourage students to become defenders of human rights in local, national, and international communities. It defines key terms, such as *responsibility* (personal, social, legal, and moral), *rules*, *diversity*, *participation*, *discrimination*, *law*, *citizenship*, *democracy*, *state sovereignty*, *covenant*, *equality*, *justice*, and *global community*. In its sample activities, it recommends the use of language respectful of race, sex, and religion and the identification of “stereotypes about others.” (Peace Resource Center 2000) It even integrates physical strength, size, features, age, culture, disability, financial status, and clothing as factors to be considered in determining the image of others. Working cooperatively, problem solving, sharing resources with the community, recognizing a diversity of opinions and making a concerted effort to understand them, taking responsibility for one’s own values and actions, and learning to analyze human rights problems are other program objectives.

Attitudinal objectives are the core of the program: partners in the program are expected to internalize the attitudes in their personal ethical framework. Assumptions about others must be identified and deconstructed. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is interpreted in the perspective of the program.

For example, the NGO interprets the article on marriage and the family (article 16):

Individuals respect the right of all people to enter into relationships of their own choosing, and also the nature of the relationships chosen for marriage, family and friendship. They believe that males and females enter into relationships as equals, and remain so regardless of the status of their relationship (Peace Resource Center 2000).

Regarding freedom of belief, religion, and opinion, the individual is asked to respect “the right of alternative and opposing points of view to exist. He values other points of view and the freedom of all to choose their own beliefs, religion, opinions, information and associations.” But this interpretation exceeds tolerance: valuing implies positive acceptance of the values of another person. The importance of acting as a citizen is stressed. Articles of the Universal Declaration on personal development within society are interpreted as follows: “The individual desires to improve the welfare of all members of her local, state, and global community. She believes that all people can and should live in dignity, and therefore values efforts to meet individual needs as they arise” (Peace Resource Center 2000). The program creates the right to have rights, and these rights are those created by the global conferences and any other new rights emerging from civil society. All this is pabulum, of course, but the problem is that the changes described above have already taken place, especially in the Western world, which now imposes them on the developing world.

The same descriptive material is used by the *People’s Decade for Human Rights Education* (PDHRE), a consortium of social justice and human rights organizations working in partnership with the UN. It considers poverty, warfare, environmental degradation, the deleterious effects of globalization, discrimination, disease, illiteracy, and labor exploitation to be human rights violations. It seeks to establish a framework for “serious global debate” questioning the “relevance of human rights to the people of the world.” PDHRE asks whether human rights “are merely legal abstractions,” “products of patriarchy,” “a smokescreen for the spread of global capitalism,” or “a bunch of declarative statements by well-meaning people in the North.” PDHRE claims that global conferences have expressed “contemporary enunciations of human rights standards,” which “echo people’s struggles.” According to the consortium, human rights education is “a way of clearing . . . the ground for reclaiming and securing our right to be human. . . . It is a social and human development strategy that enables women, men, and children to become agents of social change” (PDHRE 2000).

As we can now conclude, the real actors in the education revolution are all kinds of networks forming a growing parallel global movement. These groups hold the levers of global governance, not governments who remain outsiders and let down people’s expectations for leadership. It is not because governments do not implement their intergovernmental commitments that revolutionary changes do not take place. This perfectly normal behavior should not be addressed as an unprecedented threat to democracy.

These partnerships, and others, have both an ideological and an operational purpose. The ideological purpose is dynamic and revolutionary. It is to change the thinking of different types of people to align them with the new consensus. A shared ownership of the agenda is the goal. The UN Secretariat and its partners have an awareness-raising function, hence the paramount importance attributed by the new paradigm to

educational reform and to the UN normative function. The operational purpose of partnerships is diverse: to get financing, to adapt technology to local development needs, to create new institutional mechanisms, training, or just networking. At Jomtien governments failed to understand that the broadening of the scope of education that they endorsed was bound to lead to the strengthening of informal education networks and increasing pressure on formal education systems and governments to implement the agenda of NGOs. Nor did they grasp the causal relationship between revolutionary concepts and revolutionary change. The latter is the cause, the former the effect and consequence of change. This order contradicts the logic of the democratic process where change is preceded by consent. The logic of revolutionary change is strikingly expressed by the Indian proverb saying that the standard began to flap before the wind rose. Outsiders and opponents do not see that. They believe that nothing can come out of the cant that manifests a revolution that has occurred.

Direct partnership with youth, the primary beneficiary of education, is a new focus of the UN at large. Almost 20 percent of the world's population, that is, 1.06 billion, is between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four: the largest generation of young people in history. The UN focus on youth dates to 1985, the *International Youth Year*. In 1995, while celebrating the tenth anniversary of the youth year, the UN General Assembly adopted the *World Program of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond* (WPAY), which builds on the Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, and Beijing conferences. It integrates the new vision. The WPAY views young people as agents of social change, but also as vulnerable: two criteria justifying the priority given to youth by the UN. The UN resolution invites member-states to include youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly (participatory democracy) and urges governments that have not done so to formulate and adopt an integrated national youth policy. It also indirectly recommends the integration of the new global norms in school curricula (human rights education, sexual education, environmental education).

The program of action urges youth ministers to intensify global cooperation. The first *World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth* took place in Lisbon in August 1998, preceded by the UN's third world youth forum (held in Braga, Portugal). The forum recommended strengthening national youth NGO platforms and informal and formal consultative mechanisms between national youth NGOs and governments, acting as equal partners. The UN was asked to serve as an example by supporting the broad involvement of youth NGOs in its decision-making process. The UN now has a youth unit, part of the UN Secretariat (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and its focal point for matters relating to youth. The goals of the youth unit include promoting global standards on youth and recognition of the rights of youth. Establishing a permanent youth assembly as a representative body of global youth has been in the air. A charter for the youth general assembly already exists. In the same spirit the general conference of UNESCO adopted a "strategy for action with and for youth" in 1999. The strategy dispels the notion that young people will passively "inherit the earth." Young people "are the present" and want to be considered "full and equal citizens," "serious and reliable partners" (UNESCO 1999c). A direct partnership with youth is an emerging priority for UNESCO and the UN system in general.

Six of the world's largest youth movements—the World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, the World Organization of the Scout Movement, the International Federation of Red Cross and

Red Crescent Societies, the World Young Women's Christian Association, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and the International Award Association—recently issued a working document. These organizations argue that nonformal education groups are entitled to participate in national policymaking. The document addresses the need for a national youth policy, inspired by a consensus-based vision aiming at creating a “youth that is autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed” (WAYMCA et al. 1999).

The document defines the type of youth and future citizens the world needs. Young men and women should be “able to make choices and to control their personal and social life as an individual and as a member of society” (the paradigm of choice). They should also be able “to show concern for others, to act with them and for them, to share their concerns,” be committed and “able to assert themselves in respect to values, a cause or an ideal and to act accordingly.” The group's earlier document, *The Education of Young People*, identifies the needs of young people and the challenges facing them, namely, “finding a secure starting point for themselves based on values, self-awareness and self-confidence” (people-centeredness), developing a “sense of belonging and identity, gaining acceptance and being recognized,” a “sense of usefulness by making a contribution to the development of their community and beyond” (participation, governance), and “learning to recognize the value of cooperation and teamwork” and acquiring the ability to cope with change and technological progress (WAYMCA et al. 1999).

The later document notes that people's personal development takes place in “circumstances of increasing uncertainty” and considers it “understandable that . . . [they] feel insecure in terms of identity and their role in society.” The document identifies a triple educational deficit. “Many schools tend to teach more and more but educate less and less.” In informal education, “many families tend to give independence rather than teach autonomy to their children,” while the “consumer society teaches youth the price of everything but the value of nothing” (WAYMCA et al. 1999): Oscar Wilde's definition of a cynic. As an antidote, the youth groups call for society to value nonformal education.

The document's recommendations for “producing” adults needed by society conform to the new paradigm. National youth policy must be coherent, interdisciplinary, long-term (sustainability), with clear goals, and the result of national consensus. All stakeholders in education, NGOs, and young people themselves are equal partners. The Lisbon declaration had stressed that the active participation of youth in all sectors of society and in decision-making at national and international levels should be strengthened. The Lisbon declaration had also recommended that a national youth policy be consistent with the cultural, economic, and environmental diversity of each society. The document on a national youth policy, in line with the Lisbon declaration, emphasizes the necessary broad, holistic basis of education in its formal, informal, and nonformal forms. In addition, each country needs a dynamic national youth policy “conceived as a long-term strategic instrument and not out of short-term political expediency” to last beyond changes of majority. To meet this requirement, a national youth policy should be the “result of a wide national consensus” representing the views of all (or most) political parties, NGOs concerned with youth, and the young people themselves.

In most Western countries an overall reform of education took place, from preschool to university, to form a seamless educational web of unending learning and skill acquisition that begins in the home with the young and continues through elementary school, post-secondary education, and the workplace. The *holistic* paradigm identified with the spontaneous trend toward education as a *seamless web* and codified education reform into norms that it now seeks to impose globally.

The UN seeks to carry out its norms in education as a global, *horizontal* project demanding coordination of all available resources in the community, strong links between elementary schools and secondary and post-secondary institutions, and between formal, nonformal and information education, and a partnership with all stakeholders. The paradigm endorses the integration of academics with vocational training, involvement of educators in youth activities and cooperation of social service agencies. It includes adult education to strengthen skills and improve earning power—and therefore a partnership (virtual if not explicit) with business—through lifelong learning, and for workers dislocated by globalization, vocational and technological reeducation.

The strategic objective of global educational reform is not only horizontal, but *vertical*: to transform in depth the cultural, social, and economic life of individuals and communities and to engineer a new way to deal with the challenges of reality. The vertical parameter of educational reform determines the changes in behavior and societal variables needed to reinvent the future of culture and society. The parameter criticizes traditional norms for being sectoral and simplistic. It proposes new values that radicalize traditional values such as the sovereign right to choose, genderism, self-awareness or proactive tolerance.

Removing the Mask

The new paradigm is not really holistic as it claims to be, but reductionist. It reduces religion to spirituality and spirituality to mental health, human creativity to the Skinnerian acquisition of skills, health to reproductive health, and governance to the enlightened despotism of “experts.” In sum, it reduces the actual human person to an abstract individual whose needs, rights, and values are determined according to a collectivist agenda—the paradigm.

Human fulfillment and social interaction concern the whole person and require organic partnerships with family, enterprise, and religion. What distinguishes human beings from “other members of the animal kingdom” is not only their power of “mental functioning,” but their quest for happiness. The truly personal requirements of human existence and social order depend on elements such as conscience, love, sharing, friendships, and other spiritual realities that transcend rights and political values.

The new *Weltanschauung* separates education and health systems from the principles of the American democratic tradition. The Global New Left, of which the past administration was both a partner and a leader, attempts to reorient the national purpose, change mental habits, reinvent the constitutional process and make it conform to the paradigm. The UN system uses holism as a strategy to enact the new values universally and to allow the new paradigm to go forward in a revolutionary and integrated order. But social bonding depends on an order higher than governance. New values of a lower order, those of global governance, hijack and

supersede traditional values. The order of governance itself is degraded and loses its legitimacy and paradoxically its sustainability.

In the reality of human existence and social organization, the market, the family, the nation, religion, and also health and education systems have a specific and complementary role: business is business, health is health, education is education, government is government. In the paradigm, all is in all, education is health, health is development, youth and NGOs make policy and law, the objective of teaching is no longer teaching but social engineering. Everything must concern everybody. Everybody has all roles to play. Health and education become all-encompassing. In what may truly be called the inversion of holism, the global vision blurs the perception of the specificity of each component.

But we should distinguish between genuine holism and holism as it is understood in the UN system. In genuine holism there is a plurality of parts, a complexity that results from the specificity of functions and activities. There is also a configuration, a common purpose, a pluralist human community. At the level of the nation, the national purpose marshals and organizes individual aspirations, and achieves orderly development. Human and social development is pluralistic in the sense that it is accomplished simultaneously at various levels: the production of goods and services, education, family, religion, political involvement. Business, localities, family, and religion have specific identities within the whole and also a function that no other activity can and will properly perform. Personal and social fulfilment require at the same time diversity and a full, enlightened commitment to the aspirations and objectives of the human person.

Lurking in the paradigm is the assertion of the primacy of the whole, now represented by civil society: the more global the objectives, the more perfect and superior the level of governance mandated to implement them. The new paradigm seems to assume that universalism is the highest value. The global agenda assumes that the global community is the perfect community and denies all limits to its governance. Traditional political theory uses the *subsidiarity principle* to explain the limits of governance and the complementarity of the parts. But subsidiarity does more than suggest that personal life, family, jobs, and political governance have subsidiary, sectoral, complementary roles. This mutual complementarity should not be perceived in terms of a mere division of labor. There is indeed genuine unity in human fulfilment and in the pluralist web of democratic governance. But this requires a free, responsible choice of purpose. The individual must choose, in truth and conscience, what he wants to be. Every constituted society must similarly define its national purpose.

For ideological reasons, the new paradigm perceives the UN system and global civil society as a global sovereign community. It claims that the UN system has normative power that may be used to control the free determination and creativity of the individual and of the nation, to curtail the fundamental role of family and religion, and to deny democratic governance. The undemocratic, un-American claim by the United Nations is compounded by the recourse made by the world organization to hidden power mechanisms. Having itself little or no enforcing capability, the UN uses its partners in health and education as the enforcing arm of global governance. WHO's role turns into an executive that tells each health partner what to do. The same is true of UNESCO. This process is neither transparent nor accountable.

There are signs that the paradigm's claim to universality is already on the wane and in the process of

being cut down to size. After sailing for a long time unconcerned with democratic impropriety and silent opposition, the ship is now taking water.

The Global Ethic

Culture (defined by the Global New Left to include values, ethics, lifestyles, spirituality and religion) is the new paradigm's last frontier of social transformation. Environmental protection, social equity, and population stabilization, together with the new rights, remain the fundamental goals of sustainable development, but the dynamic of the Global New Left's "forward movement" is now shifting to building a global culture with normative values deriving from the *imperative* of sustainable development. Innocuously enough, it calls this global culture a *culture of peace*.

In 2000, the UN Secretariat launched a global movement for a culture of peace, and the General Assembly proclaimed the years 2001–2010 to be the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence." With the adoption of the concept of the culture of peace, argues Kofi Annan, the areas of education, human rights, sustainable economic and social development, gender equality, democratic participation, tolerance and solidarity, free information, international peace and security are linked for the first time "into a single coherent concept." The culture of peace is the latest "whole" in which the paradigm has been enlarged. It interlinks its components in such a way, says Annan, "that the sum of their complementarities and synergies can be developed" (Annan, 2000d). In other words, the culture of peace is the paradigm's holistic concept *par excellence*. At this stage, it is hard to imagine how the Global New Left could further enlarge the conceptual framework of the new paradigm, for every possible area of human activity has already been integrated.

According to Federico Mayor, former UNESCO director-general, only culture can "bring about the changes of attitudes needed to ensure peace and sustainable development which, we know, form the only possible way forward for life on planet Earth" (UNESCO, World Culture Report 1999). The UN proclaims that we are now in transition toward a culture of peace and non-violence, and as usual international NGOs are the primary partners of the UN in orchestrating this transition. That a culture of peace is a desirable end in itself in the era of globalization is self-evident. But what is disturbing about the "culture of peace" is that its norms and values are constructed by UN experts, are meant to be globally normative and geared toward a particular agenda—the realization of sustainable development. The culture of peace is not, by any means, a spontaneous, bottom-up process.

A broad acceptance of new values and a particular direction to social change is more fundamental in its implications and longer-term in its impact than development programs alone. Sustainable development, as its proponents now understand it, is less about programs than about radically changing thinking habits, creating lifestyles, and educating people about their rights and responsibilities.

The new paradigm's ambition to change thinking habits does not stop with instrumental logic, but carries over to what it refers to as a spiritual component. The sustainable development process has developed tacit alliances with groups and individuals advocating new forms of spirituality that consider all life forms sacred and equal. Ensuring the collective survival of humankind means, for them, reestablishing a spiritual connection with "Mother Earth." UNESCO's efforts to produce a universal ethics as an adjunct to a global culture of peace is a prominent case in point—to which we return in a moment. But let us first look more generally at the attitudes underlying the effort to create a new set of global values.

New Global Values

Despite its utopianesque tones, the perspective of the new global ethic—as that of the rights approach, the health-for-all movement, global education reform, and the new spirituality—is fundamentally pessimistic. This is evident mainly on two grounds.

First, the urgent global adoption of the new values of sustainable development is invariably characterized as the only alternative to impending doom. The Global New Left is alarmist and insists that its version of global values must be treated as an ethical imperative in a context of unprecedented insecurity, growing poverty, social fragmentation, inequity, ethnic conflict, the extinction of cultural diversity and global self-destruction. The partners address an ultimatum to the world: "Either you adopt the values that we propose, or we all perish!" Therefore, as former US Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs Tim Wirth put it, "an ethic of stewardship and justice that enables us to live within our own limits is necessary" (Wirth 1996, 31).

The second pessimistic trend of the new ethic is its persistent antimarket bias, stemming from a negative anthropological view, a lack of confidence in the human being and his or her creative capacity, and irrational fears concerning the state of the environment. The values of human creativity, liberty, taking risks to innovate and progress, responsibility for one's acts, dominion over nature, confidence in the future and the spirit of free and private enterprise, which are fundamentally parts of human dignity, together with the accompanying ethic and responsibilities, are conspicuously absent from the new global ethic. The partners view the logic of the market as unethical. In their view, the market provokes all of the evils mentioned above and is rarely credited for being the engine of development. Therefore, the pessimistic global ethic specifically targets the business community.

The pessimistic perspective establishes a causal link between the universality of the new ethic and the global scope of social, economic, and environmental *problems* resulting from economic globalization. For the Global New Left, global problems have produced a global ethic—the first global ethic ever, and never mind that all the world's great religions have propounded concepts of universal ethics going back now for more than four thousand years. To make global coexistence viable and realizable (economically, ecologically, socially, and culturally), a universal ethic positing itself as the ethic of sustainability and inclusion must *transcend* that religious tradition and establish its own view as mandatory. The order of logic is clear: first the global conferences proclaimed that global problems required global solutions, and now the forward movement

argues, according to Yersu Kim, who heads UNESCO's Division of Philosophy and Ethics, that "global problems require global values" (Kim 1999). The debate is now brought to a superior, ethical level in order to reinforce the authority of the paradigm.

By pointing to the evils of economic globalization and its contradictions (growing wealth versus impoverishment, inclusion versus exclusion, and so on), the forward movement creates a need for a new global social contract, a new kind of economy, and a new form of development in which, according to Ricupero, Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), "the decisive factors are no longer capital, cheap labor or an abundance of natural resources," but knowledge and participation. (Ricupero 1999).

Participation is an essential component of the new social contract. It has become an ethical imperative that directly confronts the evils of economic globalization in order to create a *society for all*, or *inclusive globalization*. Groups defending people's rights must be allowed to participate in policy-making. All have an equal right to participate. The outlook of the cultural revolution is, of course, progressive. The process of social transformation through participation is channeled through various global governance mechanisms, mainly NGOs, at national and international policymaking levels. Participation as a new right is a key element of the new paradigm's balance system between growth and social equity, weighing on the side of social equity.

The idea of balance in the new paradigm would not permit a radical condemnation of self-interest, the profit motive, and other liberal principles. In the new global ethic these motives are not bad in themselves, but they must be balanced by global values. However, the paradigm of the market, which promotes competition, growth, and progress, continues to be harshly judged as unethical. Of course, this creates a dilemma. Between the market requirement of development and equity, and the various proponents of the two, the matter remains unresolved. Those concerned with building a new global ethics continue to argue against the market. Leftist opinion has even claimed that sustainable development is incompatible with economic globalization. At the Millennium NGO Forum the partners spoke of sustainable development *rather* than growth. Hence the dilemma faced by the international community, which must accommodate both present economic institutions and the new ethics promoted by the UN.

Likewise, the new paradigm asserts that the equity principle is incompatible with the high material standard of living in the West because the standard is not applicable to all human populations. Equity as a global value is contradicted by widening global economic disparities. Limits must therefore be placed on growth; there should be "cutbacks in present consumption of the haves and in the future aspirations of the have-nots," said Denis Goulet from Notre Dame University's Department of Economics at a World Bank seminar. (Goulet 1996, 10) The minimal ethical imperative commands the abolition of absolute poverty in the world, and since it would not be ethical to grow one's way out of poverty given the environmental implications, the only ethically acceptable remedy is population stabilization on the one hand and massive transfers of wealth from the rich to the poor on the other. The maximalists put the matter even more bluntly:

How can strategists promoting sustainable authentic development deal with the hundreds of millions who have a vested interest in the destructive economic dynamism now prevailing in the world? What incentives, what countervailing power, what persuasive alternative interests can dissuade corporations from continuing to place short-term profit from resource extraction above long-term environmental protection? (Goulet 1996, 11)

Within the UN system, it is UNESCO's specific mandate to bring about the new culture, to make a substantive contribution to defining the norms and values of the new social contract, and to formulate the new global ethics. Global education reform, UNESCO's foremost tool, ultimately aims at creating a new global culture—a view widely shared throughout the UN system. Development will occur, writes Ismail Serageldin, former Vice President of the World Bank, “only when we have belief systems that respect all life, assign priority to the common good, engender responsibility for the whole, promote equality, and support unconditional caring” (Serageldin and Barrett 1996, v).

UNESCO has taken a leadership role in shaping such a belief system. The organization is working hard on a common framework for the ethics of the twenty-first century, which it believes to be grounded in its 1945 constitution:

A peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. (UNESCO Constitution)

But UNESCO does not have a static vision of its mandate. The organization's “historic vocation” has been to focus on cross-cultural moral principles found in all traditions and civilizations, “to enlarge that common ground of intellectual and moral solidarity, to delve into the problems that imperil the future of humanity, and at the same time to facilitate better communication and cooperation among nations and cultures” (Kim 1999). Here again, the use of the word “enlarge” reveals the Global New Left's hijacking strategy. UNESCO is a global agent of cultural and ethical change.

Are the new cultural norms and values being devised by UNESCO and the rest of the UN system democratically recognized and adopted, or are they imposed by bureaucrats and NGO “experts”? In other words, is participatory democracy really democratic? UN attempts to enhance participation contain an inherent contradiction. On the one hand, the process of social transformation must start from the base, from the choices made by individuals, and it must focus on people's needs. On the other hand, social transformation requires externally imposed and proactive efforts which are necessarily non participatory, with factors such as affirmative action quotas. The UN generates social change by integrating its new values in civil society through education, the spreading of new cultural patterns, awareness raising, Delphi, and other consensus building techniques that often prove to be manipulative. Agents of change, or what Kofi Annan calls “agents

of socialization,” will enlighten and revitalize civil society and *clarify* people’s values (Annan 2000e, 3). In the end, the new values must be “owned” by all citizens.

The integration of the new values in civil society is supposed to transform people’s mental habits. Through this transforming integration people internalize the values of the new culture. Once that is done, the process of social transformation can shift from ownership to participatory democracy. People are not invited to participate before they have internalized the new values. At the end of the process, participation becomes an obligation. Hence the UNESCO Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence—written by Nobel Peace Prize laureates and already signed by a number of heads of state and governments and personalities such as Michael Gorbachev—states that social transformation “*demand*s the participation of each and every one of us” (emphasis added). The right to participation becomes a responsibility, a duty, and an obligation.

Building new social paradigms involves deconstructing old traditional ones—a process that of course does not come naturally to groups invited to participate in social transformation. The movement leading from awareness to ownership, and from internalization to participation, is controlled by the mechanisms of global governance. It originates primarily from self-governing organizations (NGOs), working in partnership with international institutions. The democratic character of awareness raising, on the one hand, and of participation as it is now meant, on the other, is thus very questionable. Those who have engineered participatory democracy claim that it has resulted spontaneously from evolution and change within societies and systems. But even their own explanation of the process contradicts that claim.

As will be more evident in the forthcoming chapter on business, the creation of global ethical norms is intended to strengthen the UN and global governance. The contents of the new consensus, including values, are indivisible from the process of global governance. The quality of global governance is, in turn, said to be determined by “the broad acceptance of a global civic ethic to guide action within the global neighborhood, and courageous leadership infused with that ethic at all levels of society” (CGG 1995, 46). The process is, once again, circular.

The role of international NGOs has proved crucial in the creation of new global values. NGOs claim to own ethics. International NGOs also have a global sense of what they generically refer to as “human identity.” Civil society is global and bottom up, so, therefore, are the values of the global ethic. The values of free enterprise, national sovereignty, religions, dogma, natural law—in other words, traditional values—are rejected as being top down. In reality, however, the new value and belief systems promoted by radical NGOs are themselves eminently top-down, because they are globally normative: the values of the global ethic should be integrated in the evolving system of international norms, according to *Our Global Neighbourhood*, the report of the Commission on Global Governance, “adapting, where necessary, existing norms of sovereignty and self-determination to changing realities” (CGG 1995, 48).

In addition, the report affirmed that the efficacy of the global ethic will depend on the ability of people and governments to transcend their self-interests and to agree that “humanity as a whole will be best served by acceptance of a set of common rights and responsibilities” (CGG 1995, 336). In the new paradigm global civil society, not individuals or governments or business, represents the interests of all people. Lo and behold, this

makes NGOs the true upholders of values. According to the UNESCO universal ethics project, the “legitimacy and efficacy” of NGOs do not result “from some organized form of coercion. Rather they spring from the urgency of the problems at hand” (Kim 1999) and from the relevance of universal values.

As in other areas of the new paradigm, the legitimacy of the process now creating global values rests on continuity: basic human values have always been fundamental to human culture and democratic government. The logic goes that global values are then fundamental to global culture and democracy. They are necessary to respond to challenges that are “cross-national, cross-cultural, cross-sectoral,” and to address the evils of economic globalization. By virtue of their global character, the new values allegedly transcend previous values: the new values are presented as holistic and global, and traditional values as partial and regional. This is why traditional values that are not integrated in the new global whole are declared to be irrelevant. Their irrelevance created an ethical vacuum calling for the creation of global values. The holistic process of integrating traditional values in the global ethic creates a whole larger than the sum of its parts. As we by now know, such holism is *transforming* in the sense, at least, that it destroys the identity of the parts.

The strategy of the partners has been, as usual, to deny that they had created new values, just as they denied that they had created new rights. They pretend that the integration of traditional values in global ethics is genuine. But the process is reversed: it is the political agenda of the Global New Left that determines the norms, instead of being ruled by traditional values. Traditional democratic values have to lose their identity because, if enforced and safeguarded, they would make the hijacking of the “global governance” process of the Global New Left quite impossible.

The thesis of the new ethicists is that without the universal recognition and enforcement of these new global values, economic globalization would perpetuate or even aggravate inequities, irreversibly pollute the global commons, destroy major ecosystems, increase health hazards, and lead humanity to self-destruction. The values of private enterprise, national sovereignty, world religions, and diverse cultural, political, or philosophical backgrounds are associated with the pattern of material growth and uncontrolled consumption and population growth. They are described as destructive and unsustainable. New values such as ecological awareness recognize the “symbiotic relationship between humanity and the planet” (Serageldin and Barrett 1996, v). Ecological awareness responds to global needs and extends to all life forms: its holistic character even transcends human life. The new values are centered on the quality of life for all, not on development as growth. They become horizontally systemic, applying to everybody and to all situations. They are also vertically normative in that they transcend previous value systems.

Our Global Neighbourhood identifies the values needed for global governance. It says that global governance must first be founded on the Golden Rule: people should treat others as they would themselves wish to be treated. The report mentions respect for life, justice, liberty, integrity, caring, equity, mutual respect, and tolerance. The report also says that people are instinctively caring. In the global neighborhood, it is taken for granted that the instinct of mutual care has a universal reach. The ethical and economic implications of this assumption are far-reaching, among which egalitarian politics and the global redistribution of goods.

The report recognizes life and liberty as the fundamental aspirations of all human beings. All must also be treated fairly. Equity, however, does not equate with equality, but requires a deliberate effort to promote a fairer sharing of resources. Gustav Speth, former UNDP Administrator, argues that “we need greater equity within countries, between countries, between the sexes, and we need greater equity for future generations” (Peeters 1996e). The ethics of equity implies that sustainable development advances every individual’s economic, social, environmental, and spiritual well-being. What it really implies, as suggested above, is a redistributive ethic applied on a global scale.

The values of global governance are also self-determination, participation, harmony, prosperity for all, responsibility for the future, active non-violence, sharing of resources, sustainability, gender equity, caring for the earth, and worldwide democracy. Only by adopting those values can civil society collectively transform “a global neighborhood based on economic exchange and improved communications into a universal moral community in which people are bound together by more than proximity, interest or identity” (CGG 1995, 49).

There has not been a formal UN conference on values. However, the global conferences of the 1990s on the environment, human rights, population, social development, habitat, and women reflected the increasing acceptance of shared values relating to sustainability. The ethic of sustainability, said Joan Martin Brown of the Division of Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development at the World Bank, has “got to be more than the economic bottom-line, . . . other values count too, not just economic values, but also the value of society, the value of heritage, the value of nature” (Peeters 1998a). Sustainability is the ethic of the future. It has become the new parameter of civic education. Sustainability as an ethical value gives “a sense of community based on mutual responsibility” and requires an “enormously improved understanding of what it means to live in a more crowded, interdependent world with finite resources” (CGG 1995, 6).

Ideally, sustainability is a system balanced between social and environmental concerns and economic growth. Sustainability as an ethical value becomes a way of living, a philosophy, a new, global culture. This global culture of sustainability is confronted with a multicultural global society. The new ethic’s dilemma is that it aims at establishing sustainability as a normative culture on the one hand, but it also is a process that is supposed to express the richness of individual, spiritual, and ethnic identity on the other. The new ethic resolves this dilemma through consensus building. The objective of consensus building is more than operational balance between all viewpoints, when sustainability as a global culture is balanced against the diversity of cultures, the rights of states are balanced against the rights of people, and the interests of nations are balanced against the interests of the global neighborhood. Indeed, sustainability as an ethical balance has content: it concerns rights, collective identity, and has its own set of values that must somehow integrate, transform, and transcend all existing cultures. Up to now, the problem of multiculturalism has been approached from the perspective of human rights, but new norms are devised to shift from the rights approach to sustainability as an ethical balance. When and if that is achieved, cultures will be submitted to a new form of absolutism, that of the global consensus.

The redefinition of tolerance is typical of the new social ethic. The 1995 UNESCO Declaration of Principles on Tolerance defines *tolerance* as

respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication, and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance is harmony in difference. It is not only a moral duty, it is also a political and legal requirement (UNESCO 1995).

Tolerance is “not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is above all, an active attitude.” It is active because it implies upholding “human rights, pluralism, democracy and the rule of law” and “the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism.” It allows one to “adhere to one’s own convictions” while accepting “that others adhere to theirs.” In education, it addresses “the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance.” It entails respect for the “multicultural character of the human family.” Tolerance means “accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are” (UNESCO 1995).

To interpret properly this seemingly innocuous definition, one must place it in the context of the new paradigm’s redefinition of human rights, democracy, and participation. Tolerance now means, inter alia, actively upholding the new rights, participatory democracy and global governance. Furthermore, tolerance has become a much more active value than it used to be, shifting from *respecting* the values of the other to altogether *accepting* them: a subtle, but decisive shift. Once limited to respecting the nature and beliefs of other persons, tolerance now refers to the transforming integration of ethnic, religious, and cultural differences: *transculturalism*. It *translates* into active acceptance of the values of the other and internalization of the value of tolerance. This sort of proactive tolerance could lead to a global harmonization of values and, paradoxically, to the promotion of monolithic identity (both individual and cultural) and consequently of a diminution of genuine diversity.

Proactive tolerance is an essential part of participatory governance. Not only is individual and cultural diversity taken as a given, but it is integrated and therefore promoted. Integration as proactive tolerance becomes therefore a main function of governance. Proactive tolerance is the final enlargement of governance and, as a consequence, it follows that the integration of ethnic and cultural diversity will determine the new structures of the nation-state.

Solidarity is another societal value, the catchword of the 1996 Istanbul conference on human settlements. Wally N’Dow, its secretary-general, repeatedly stated that Istanbul was not just about “bricks and mortar,” but about the “urban soul,” about “how people relate to one another in their streets, in their neighborhoods.” N’Dow organized the Forum on Human Solidarity with “visionaries, women and men who are exchanging ideas on issues that keep people together” and on what divides global and local societies. He wanted to reflect on how to make settlements “not only human but humane,” how to “build social capital as a basis for a civil society essential to individual and collective prosperity and satisfaction” (Peeters 1996c). Solidarity concerns primarily social inclusion, and as a result poverty is increasingly approached in terms of social exclusion and less in terms of physical need.

Solidarity is also the ethical norm ruling the governance of the differences between individuals, groups, and nations. There are two types of diversity. Some differences are said to be positive, and others to destroy solidarity. In the Global New Left paradigm, solidarity would be possible only under social conditions of equality and equity, that is, when differences between rich and poor have been abolished. Heterogeneity, disparities, and inequity dilute solidarity. The UN and its global governance partners should therefore create conditions favorable to solidarity by ensuring implementation of the equity principle. When lifestyles are standardized, then solidarity becomes self-generating. It is assumed that solidarity coming from the people generates by itself under favorable conditions. It is not, and cannot be, an idea coming from outside that people should implement. But, of course, that is exactly what it is.

A new strain has thus appeared in the new ethic. If solidarity requires or leads to value standardization, it threatens the pursuit of identity, which also is an essential component of the new paradigm. There is no consensus, however, on interpreting solidarity as standardization.

Solidarity then destroys identity and means standardization. There is no consensus, however, on this interpretation of solidarity. Another view claims that assuming that uniformity causes solidarity is as simplistic as saying that difference results in conflict (see UNESCO, Commonwealth Secretariat 1999). However it is interpreted in the new paradigm, solidarity has become an important cross-cultural principle. In practice it translates into joint efforts to eradicate poverty, a global priority. If poverty is not eradicated, huge global problems, particularly regarding the environment, will persist. The Rio objectives and those of the other global conferences cannot be attained if poverty is not eradicated.

The Framework of Universal Ethics

In its universal ethics project, UNESCO provides the philosophical grid with which to shape the global ethic and facilitate its implementation. It also provides the international forum in which ethicists come together on the basis of an intergovernmental platform. UNESCO's Division of Philosophy and Ethics has taken the initiative to define the *common substratum of values* claimed as necessary to make global coexistence possible. The project, supposedly, will fill a vacuum: "Globalization does not come with moral norms built in." If such norms are not created, "the new realities may leave us in a morality-free zone" (UNESCO DPE 1997). The scope of ethics "can no longer stop at the edge of our family, our society or our nation. Hope lies in action in accordance with a shared ethics" (Kim 1999). Global problems, it is assumed therefore, defy traditional solutions. We note, from the start, the flawed foundation of the global ethics—as if world religious traditions did not have answers that remain valid in the era of globalization.

The UNESCO project was launched in early 1997. Two international meetings of experts were convened (Paris, March 1997, and Naples, December 1997). The thirty ethicists who contributed at these two meetings include Hans Küng (a German leader of the global ethic movement and initiator of the Parliament of the World's Religions), Karl-Otto Apel (German philosopher), Rudd Lubbers (also involved with the earth charter, a member of the Club of Rome and professor of globalization at Tilburg and Harvard universities), Hong-Koo Lee (South Korean politician, former Prime Minister), Tu Wei-Ming (Chinese historian and

philosopher), and Hassan Hanafi (Professor of Philosophy at Cairo University). In its present form, UNESCO's global ethics project is called *A Common Framework for the Ethics of the Twenty-first Century*. The framework was put together by Yersu Kim, director of UNESCO's Division of Philosophy and Ethics.

The practical purpose of this project is to provide a relevant document for the UN Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (2001), "a year of reflection on the values and aspirations shared by our world's people and civilizations" (Mayor 1999). The agency does not expect its project to meet with the "unanimous consent of the international community" (Kim 1999) but sees it as the start of intercultural debate and consensus building, a process described as a "conversation of humankind." The aim of the common framework project is to identify basic ethical principles for the emerging global society. It will explore "the meaning of universality in the age of cultural diversity." The search for a system of universal ethical values and principles is gaining momentum, it is self-servingly claimed, and is "a key element on the international agenda today" (Kim 1999).

The mandate and constitution of UNESCO are being used to legitimize the search for a universal ethic. UNESCO's global ethic project also rests on the ethical foundation of the new intergovernmental consensus. Global conferences played a crucial role in the emergence of global principles such as "human-centered development, the priority of poverty eradication and a concept of justice expressed as the inseparability of civil and political from economic and social rights" (Kim 1999). UNESCO claims that the conferences call for a common framework to ensure integrated, interrelated, and coherent implementation of their outcomes.

The intergovernmental conferences, however, are not the main source for UNESCO's project. The agency draws instead from the movement initiated by independent commissions and groups, more or less closely affiliated with the UN and addressing the globalization of problems. The groups have issued such pertinent documents as *The Limits of Growth* (Club of Rome, 1970s); *In Search of a Wisdom for the World: The Role of Ethical Values in Education* (Club of Rome, 1986); *Our Global Neighbourhood* (Commission on Global Governance, 1995); *Our Creative Diversity* (World Commission on Culture and Development, 1995); *the Declaration toward a Global Ethic* (Parliament of the World's Religions, 1993); *the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* (InterAction Council, 1997); and *the Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities* (UNESCO 1999). It is worth our while to say a little about these sources.

Already in the 1970s the influential Club of Rome (now counting 100 members from 52 countries and 30 national associations) had determined that our survival was at stake and that concerted global action was imperative to cope with overpopulation, industrialization, degradation of the environment, inadequacy of institutions, pollution, food production, social injustice, resource depletion, religious and other forms of extremism, intolerance, and social exclusion. The alarmist perspective of the global ethics campaign derives from the Club of Rome model. Ours is an era of "decomposition, uncertainty and crisis," claims Kim (Kim 1999). Ethics, like knowledge, has been fragmented. UNESCO's global ethics thus responds to a supposedly compelling pragmatic need. Yersu Kim also alleges that the values and institutions of the past look "increasingly irrelevant, unimportant or even counter-productive." The national state has become "woefully inadequate to deal with the new waves of global transboundary problems. The model of political authority that

had been at the basis of modern society was based on the supremacy of national states and national interests, and not on the idea of global responsibility and governance” (Kim 1999). Kim questions the continued relevance of what he calls the Western synthesis of ideas and values.

The Western synthesis was founded on the ideas of “individualism, rationalism, scientism and teleology of progress,” according to Kim. It became the reference of developing societies as they industrialized. Westernization was generally seen as “the only means of ensuring a viable future.” But today, Kim argues, Western ideas and values no longer offer “a sure guide to human survival and flourishing.” The advocates of the neoliberal economic model are “unable to deal with the growing impoverishment of much of the South, as well as with phenomena of mass unemployment and growing pauperization of a significant segment of the population in the North” (Kim 1999). Current global conditions, in Kim’s view, oblige a “new syntheses of ideas and values that would be acceptable across cultures and societies” (Kim 1999). UNESCO perceives newness as progress.

This view, too, has its antecedents. UNESCO’s *Common Framework* contains both minimalist and maximalist elements. *Our Global Neighbourhood* begins from “a common moral minimum of core values shared by all cultures and religious traditions, and a set of rights and responsibilities constituting a ‘civic code’ based on these core values” (Kim 1999). The values, as already mentioned, include “respect for life, liberty, justice and equity, mutual respect, caring and integrity.” *Our Creative Diversity* sought to provide “the minimum moral guidance the world needs in its efforts to deal with global issues” (Kim 1999) and to establish the global ethic on five pillars: “human rights and responsibilities; democracy and the elements of civil society; the protection of minorities; commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and fair negotiation; and intergenerational equity” (WCCD 1996, 17).

The Parliament of the World’s Religions, another source for UNESCO, focused on a culture of nonviolence, respect for life, solidarity, tolerance, equal rights, and truthfulness. Kūng established the global ethic on two founding principles: “Every human being should be treated humanely,” and the Golden Rule. In his view, the two principles give rise to four broad cultural commitments: nonviolence and respect for life, solidarity and a just economic order, tolerance and a life of truthfulness, and equal rights and partnership between men and women. Kūng identified “the minimum of what the religions of the world have in common now in the ethical sphere,” which derives from “broad, ancient guidelines for human behavior” and integrates the sociology of religion and ethics, cultural anthropology, and other social sciences (Kim 1999).

Our Creative Diversity specified that all governments must implement the principles of a global ethic. “But the implementation of a global ethic requires other actors as well: transnational corporations, international organizations, and the global civil society. All three can and must be influenced and mobilized” (WCCD 1996, 17). Here again, as we see—and certainly by now could have guessed—the new paradigm, the global ethics cannot be implemented without the assistance of all “partners” in global governance. Process and contents, consensus on global ethic and global governance, are indivisible. Global governance leads to “global democracy” and thus requires a global ethic based on the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, and human rights which are universal, not selective. The Commission on Culture and

Development suggests greater democracy in global governance, which should include the decision making processes and the work of the G-7—an “inevitable development since democracy is rarely so obliging as to stop at national borders.” The commission recommended that “the rich nations should be as prepared to open their economies and to undertake structural adjustments as they are eager to press poor nations to do so” (WCCD 1996, 60–61).

As we have seen, pluralism and tolerance as the “proactive” acceptance of the other’s identity belong to the core of the new global ethic. In the past, notes the WCCD, because it was imposed, development too often led to “the loss of identity, sense of community and personal meaning.” Now identity must be reconstructed. In the new paradigm people want to participate in global development (and thereby acquire a global identity), “but in terms of their own traditions” (WCCD 1996, 15). The communities of the world want to be “empowered to define their cultures in terms of who they have been, what they are today and what they ultimately want to be” (WCCD 1996, 21). Facilitating empowerment and enabling people to choose their identity are the objectives of the global ethic. But the facilitation process is not ideologically disinterested and free of an agenda. In this light, helping people choose their identity may mean helping them integrate the new ethic in their identity. In fact, the new paradigm has enlarged the scope of identity by relating it to the right to choose. The enlarged interpretation of identity tends to encompass any choice of the individual, group, nation, or even the world community to define itself: historical and cultural background, gender identity, sexual orientation, political values, religious beliefs, governance system.

The need to find the means “to deal with the great problems facing humanity today” and growing global interdependence gives “relevance and urgency to the search for common ethical values” and norms. The basic claim of UNESCO’s ethics project is that individuals, cultural and ethnic groups, and nations need a global ethic, and this too has its antecedents. UNESCO’s search for common ethical values and principles is “emboldened,” as the agency puts it, by the work on human rights and global problems accomplished by social scientists and NGOs. As mentioned earlier, NGOs are perceived as “an embryonic global civil society.” Their legitimacy and efficacy come “from the relevance and persuasiveness of the values and goals that are shared and pursued across national and cultural boundaries” (Kim 1999). As nations are built on the respect of creative diversity, the global community seeks to create, the WCCD said in 1996, “a sense of itself as a civic community, rooted in values that can be shared by all” (WCCD 1996, 20).

One of the core issues of UNESCO’s project is the search for universality in an age of diversity. “The idea of universality as something given once and for all in a transcendent or transcendental way, as has been relevant in the Western philosophical tradition,” says Kim, “today lacks persuasion and is in need of revision and development” (Kim 1999). According to *A Common Framework* the notions of “meaningfulness, incommensurability and untranslatability among cultures and languages” (Kim 1999) are presently being questioned. The new ethic will not stem from concepts, “ready-made procedures, stereotyped formulas and standardized answers” (UNESCO, DPE 1998a), legislating norms (imposed from without), didactic processes, natural law, or religious beliefs. This undoing of the traditional concept of universality is perhaps “one lasting service that relativism has rendered to philosophy” (Kim 1999). The new meaning of universality entails the

reduction of the Judeo-Christian paradigm formerly prevailing in the West to just one element in the balance of the global ethic with a weight comparable to that of other value systems, such as the ethic coming from indigenous cultures and Buddhism, and also the values of the new paradigm and the new rights culture.

Reinterpreting universality in a perspective of diversity in cultures and values, UNESCO highlights “the deep roots of suspicion regarding all universalistic projects, as well as the alliance of universalistic claims with the hegemonic intentions of certain powers.” The new ethic must be “able to respond satisfactorily to the suspicions of political ambitions indelibly associated with all universalistic projects” (Kim 1999). This is an implicit broadside against past Western world leadership—the paradox being that the concept of universality came from the West in the first place.

UNESCO’s concept turns away from universality as the “imposition of one way of being on all” and shifts to “open” meanings of universality that are “inclusive,” “shared,” and “global” (UNESCO, DPE 1997). This brings us back to the new paradigm’s balance system: ethics as a balance between all viewpoints. Of course, this does not work, because one viewpoint always necessarily transcends all the others. In the case of the new paradigm, the ethic of sustainability transcends all traditional values. The new meaning of universality is thus suffused with internal contradictions.

The UNESCO project also seeks to enlarge core values and universally recognized ethical norms by exploring “other moral languages and ethical concepts of a different ontological order” (Kim 1999). The global ethic, however, will not be syncretic or relativistic. If all values and norms were culturally and historically determined, they would have no intrinsic validity. UNESCO’s basic assumption is that shared universal values do exist. The new ethic would miss the point and indeed defeat its own purpose if it conformed to positive or negative forms of philosophical positivism. In the Western tradition, positivism has taken the form of dogmatic assertion of normative values made certain by science, and the negative form of denying purely and simply the existence of universal values. The global ethic rejects either form of positivism. In UNESCO’s view, respect for diversity, which is an essential component of the global ethic, does not lead to a relativism of values. Human values are diverse; they depend on geography and cultural history, but universal values are underlying and foremost.

This may even be true. The problem is what use is such a truth, which affirms diversity but insists that there is a non-relativistic underlying moral unity to all beliefs? Since each group will insist that its version of truth is the key to that underlying moral unity, we end up right back where we started. The purpose of the global ethic is to act as a facilitator and build consensus on what it has predetermined to be universal values.

In an effort to identify these universal values and to forge the global ethic, UNESCO confronted two schools of ethical thought: minimalism and maximalism. The minimalists start from basic principles and interest common to all people (survival, development, reciprocity) and relate moral values to these interests. By and large, however, UNESCO’s project opts for the maximalist view, which holds that the global ethic would contain “not only a few existing general principles and precepts that could serve as foundations for further elaboration” but also values that “may not be accepted by all cultures at a certain point in time.” Only a maximalist, “full-blooded” approach—in the phrase of Michael Walzer from Princeton’s School of Social

Science, as quoted by Kim—“would be capable of providing a more or less complete account of what we ought to do and how we ought to live.” A minimalist ethic is “embedded” in and depends on maximalist morality: it is not “free-standing.” In practical terms, argues Kim, it would be impossible “to build ‘downward’ from a few abstract principles” (minimalist approach) and reach the level of ethical values adequate for development and “the good life” (Kim 1999). In all likelihood, maximalist morality will present the new global values of the paradigm as universal and transcending all traditional value systems.

What, then, is the methodology of the UNESCO global ethics project? It combines two approaches: the empirical and the “reflective.” The empirical approach first inventories and compares values common to all cultures and religions. It then identifies the constraints (natural and behavioral) of the problems that demand ethical resolution. The reflective approach is difficult to grasp. It redefines the link between knowledge and ethical praxis. It differs from the empirical approach by its essential objective, which is to change individual attitudes and social norms. Ideas, values, and principles have influence, but it is “equally clear that the future has elements that may be affected and even determined by the behavior of humans acting on the basis of normative ideas and principles” (Kim 1999).

The relationship between norms and behavior is not causal as it is in science. Writes Kim, “The efficacy of normative ideas and principles to influence and modify the given constraints both in physical nature and in human behavior cannot be a clear-cut nexus” (Kim 1999).

Again ideally, the process of consensus building creates a bond between members of the community and identifies the values that bind them together. In the search for common global values, the process of consensus building and the Delphic method are preferred because they demand “the trained imagination and sensibility of those with experience in any given field” (rather than dogma). This is a finding that explains the prevalence of expertise and the influence of NGOs in the global ethic. The reflective method makes it possible to go forward without being mired in old and now defunct controversies, beliefs, and tradition. What is essential in the reflective method, writes Kim, “is that we are asking the question: What values and principles may be mobilized in order to steer the forces of technological and economic change for the purposes of human survival and flourishing?” (Kim 1999).

This is critical because the fundamental unity underlying human knowledge and ethics has been broken and culture has been fragmented. Multidisciplinarity as empirical process has been used to restore global unity and coherence, but it has also been found wanting. In the reflective process multidisciplinarity is replaced by integration, synergic consensus, what is now called *transdisciplinarity*, the “translation” of diverse values and cultures into global, universal ethics. The basic finding of the UNESCO ethic is that cultural norms and values are *translatable*. If the components of culture are translatable, diverse expressions of common needs, ideas, or perceptions can coexist and even converge toward universality (Kim 1999). So universality is possible, if only everyone would just let the partners say what it is. In fact one does not see how the translation of traditional values into a global ethic would not lead to a radical emptying of their substance.

UNESCO ethicists call this combined method a *metamethodology*: through synergy and transforming integration, those who participate in the process of forging the global ethic recreate consensus. They are

themselves transformed into a team or community and thus create “a space where there is room for diversity, for respectful confrontation and mutual transformation “ (UNESCO, DPE 1998a). In the global ethic, particularist identity and universality no longer conflict.

The consensus is cross-cultural in the sense that agreement on the values or norms of the global ethic is obtained despite the difference in beliefs or philosophical backgrounds. In his framework Kim cites Charles Taylor’s example concerning the autonomy of the person. In Western tradition and praxis the autonomy of the person is justified by the dignity and equality of human beings; in the Buddhist tradition the norm is justified by the principle of nonviolence. But the outcome of consensus-building is the same: tolerance, pluralism, equity as global and normative values.

The global ethic is not meant to be static. It demands change. What is ethically nontransforming is obsolete. The UNESCO project does not seek hasty compromises. The purpose is, on the contrary, to make explicit “a dynamic relationship, a relationship of creative tension, among conflicting but not irreconcilable values such that a common vision can emerge in an open-ended, evolutionary process of dialogue and mutual learning” (Kim 1999). The new ethic is pragmatic and situational, and is autonomous from dogma and natural law. It rather relates values to the perception of the global problems to be resolved.

The main feature of the global ethic is its focus on outcomes. The outcome of the new ethic is not a set of norms but the interactive resolution of problems and the development of human potentialities, what is called *integrative ethical knowledge* (UNESCO, DPE 1998a). The global ethics process is compared with the transformation of polyphony into a symphony, the interactive achievement of an orchestra of many instruments playing the same melody, or with the preparation of a banquet by many who work together. One respects the identity of the other and can be “comfortable with uncertainty” (UNESCO, DPE 1998a).

This process necessitates personal commitment in the form of sincerity, trust, the shared and synergic search for valid meanings and, according to one UNESCO expert, “morally relevant rightness” (Karol-Otto Apel, quoted in Kim 1999). The outcome is a universality that preserves respect for cultures in their individuality: Kim calls it *cultural synthesis*. In each moment of their history and place, cultures strive “to forge a synthesis of ideas, values and practices which would enable them to deal with the tasks of survival and flourishing within the constraints set by the natural circumstances and each culture’s knowledge and understanding of these circumstances.” The cultural synthesis is constantly evolving. “As the world and the culture’s knowledge of it change, the synthesis must be in a constant process of adaptation to these changing circumstances” (Kim 1999). Kim adds:

At some point in time and place, the synthesis would be perceived by those inside as well as outside of the culture to have reached an optimal point, a point of reflective equilibrium in the continuing process of integration and interchange of ideas and values, on the one hand, and the recalcitrant but changing environment on the other (Kim 1999).

The global ethics claims the superiority of the synthesis. The claim is based on the superiority of the new synthesis over the synthesis that preceded it, transcending “the limitations of its predecessors and competitors.” Each new cultural synthesis allegedly also avoids the weaknesses of preceding cultural syntheses while, at the same time, it incorporates their strengths. “Such a claim of optimality should be understood as a claim of universality. Since such a concept of universality is in a constant process of evolution,” Kim proposes “to regard it as a regulative ideal in the Kantian sense” (Kim 1999). In the end the global ethic is a regulative ideal and therefore differs from rights and the rights culture.

The effort to create a global ethic emphasizes the consensual process of agreement rather than substantive contents. The universal contents of the global ethic, too, are constantly evolving. Kim proposes to regard universality as a *regulative ideal*, which is hardly a clear or useful way of identifying the contents of the new global ethic. When the project finally moves from process to substantive contents, it will, presumably, inventory the values from declarations and studies, both private and public (empirical approach), and use the reflective approach to relate them to problems. The project suggests classifying problems in four clusters.

The first cluster involves readjusting the relationship between man and nature. The old paradigm separated the human being from nature, the human species being superior to other species. Through science and technology, the human race has exercised its power over nature. The global ethic now shifts from the presumably irresponsible use of such power to new values such as respect for biodiversity, protection of the human genome and of the environment, and sustainability or balance between consumption and development to protect future generations. The balance shifts from short-term to long-term thinking, from sectoral to holistic choices, from quantity to quality. The economy must “fit within the natural ecology” (Kim 1999).

The second cluster concerns the meaning of happiness, life, and fulfillment. Happiness based on materialistic accumulation contrasts with the “holistic perspective, which would enable us to balance and coordinate satisfaction among different dimensions of human existence: between ‘inner’ satisfaction and satisfaction of a material kind.” The values essential to the pursuit of happiness are respect for life, love, freedom, and the fulfillment of basic needs: health, education, and employment. “Truthfulness promotes trust.” Narcissism and fanaticism contradict the deeper structure of life: “We must cultivate an active moral intuition entailing a connection of the idea of the good” (Kim 1999).

The next cluster examines the relationship between the individual and his community. Everyone is “the center of relationships, encompassing family, society, nation and humanity”—though the business enterprise is not mentioned. The “aggressive, individualistic ethics that formed the backbone of modern industrial civilization” (Kim 1999) must be revised. Freedom and creativity must be balanced with the need for stability, peace, and order. The values are nonviolence, dialogue, tolerance, communication, initiative, the will to develop the creativity of others, solidarity, pluralism, and humility.

Finally, equality and freedom must be in balance. Injustice is the root of discrimination, exploitation, imperialism, and violence. It destroys the fabric of civil society and generates conflicts among nations. The right values are equality, democratic governance, and the rule of law (Kim 1999).

These four clusters make it clear that UNESCO's global ethic is a balance system between traditional values and new values constructed by a few "experts." The balance strategy is more subtle, hidden and dangerous than previous leftist strategies. It appears to respect traditional values, but tilts the way of the paradigm. Traditional values are transformed from within and eventually lose their identity in the course of the global ethic's dynamic integration process. Indeed, the two elements in the balance, radically different and opposed, have to be somehow united by values that transcend them, otherwise there wouldn't be a coherent resulting ethical system. It is in this process of integration that the hijacking takes place and a new form of absolutism emerges.

How does the global ethics relate to human rights? The UN system is experiencing tension between those claiming that the rights approach, in and by itself, constitutes the new global ethic and UNESCO's project, which points to the inadequacy or insufficiency of the rights approach. UNESCO grants that the human rights movement has been "the vanguard of universally shared common values": human rights gave a starting point to the formulation of a global ethic. But the agency argues that broader ethical terms must now take precedence. UNESCO's global ethics will not use the language of rights (partly because of the difficulties of Asian countries with the concept). It will address the relationship between ethics and human rights in a new, enlarged way. Universal ethics will be based "on values and principles which would be of a different, most likely higher, axiological order than those enshrined in the human rights documents" (Kim 1999).

There is another difference between the rights approach and UNESCO's global ethics: the universal ethics document will not be a legal or even a quasi-legal instrument with enforcement powers. Its only source of authority will be the relevance of global values and principles to human problems and the "persuasiveness" of these values (Kim 1999). The implementation of the global ethic will follow the pattern used to implement the global consensus. Both are nonbinding, yet *normative*. The new values of the UN indeed have started penetrating businesses' codes of conduct (see chapter six), school primers (see chapter four), and, as we have seen in chapter three, have started to influence the interpretation of hard law. It is likely that the new interaction between ethics and human rights will influence the implementation and the interpretation of human rights. The reinterpretation will be maximalist, and will therefore lead to a further enlargement of human rights. UNESCO's global ethics could lead to a formal reinterpretation of the universality of human rights in the light of the consensus. The informal or parallel process of the global ethics movement thus further contributes to undermining the normal democratic process.

Our Global Neighbourhood relates rights to responsibilities. "Common rights and responsibilities" (CGG 1995, 336) are the core of the global ethic. The global conferences of the past decade helped identify *new* individual and global responsibilities: reproductive responsibility (that is, to reproduce sustainably); social equity (addressing the imbalance between rich and poor), gender equity and equality; environmental protection for future generations through sustainable production and consumption; respect of all human rights for all; and active participation in governance. Educating people about their civic responsibility ensures the implementation of the new consensus. A civic spirit must imbue global society. Civic responsibilities are

increasingly regarded as global moral *obligations*. Universal acceptance of the new paradigm demands forging a global civic ethic.

A paradox of the ethic of responsibility is the UN's new focus on lifestyles. Life itself, the way individuals and societies live—not abstract norms, now tends to be paradigmatic. Lifestyles drive cultures, and for the new paradigm every culture is normative and educates people to their responsibilities. In the new paradigm, the lifestyles of indigenous communities are hailed as exemplary: for them, life is one. In other words, their approach is holistic. Culture is an ethic that is spontaneous, autonomous, situational. The local community “has all the resources it needs to solve its own problems.” Through the focus on lifestyles, “we will regain normality and rediscover common sense, which we have lost through fragmentation of thought.” An imbalance in the modern man between matter and spirit exists. The focus on lifestyles is an attempt to reconstruct our lost wholeness, to save us and heal our brokenness.

The paradox is that by focusing on lifestyles, the UN and its partners will transform spontaneous and concrete cultural processes into constructed and abstract norms: lifestyles will be codified, analyzed, condemned, or praised by the enlightened despots of global governance, and a combination of lifestyles deemed most apt to produce sustainable development will become globally normative. One should not underestimate the influence that such normative activity may have on formal and informal education, the media, global culture and international law. NGOs are working in partnership with the UN, in parallel ways, to transform people's mental habits, while most people do not take these developments seriously.

The Universal Culture of Peace

The quiet revolution has been a cultural revolution, and the promotion of a global movement for a universal culture of peace finalizes the process of the new paradigm. The new paradigm approaches culture as a “central variable in explaining different patterns of change and an essential determinant, if not the essence itself, of sustainable development, since attitudes and lifestyles govern the ways we manage all our non-renewable resources” (WCCD 1996, 10). Humanity's main challenge is to “adopt new ways of thinking, new ways of acting, new ways of organizing itself in society, in short, new ways of living” (WCCD 1996, 11). UNESCO urges states to make cultural policy “one of the main components of endogenous and sustainable development policy” (UNESCO 1998a).

Many do turn to culture as a way of resisting “the entropy of the global system, as a bulwark and as a refuge” (WCCD 1996, 9). They seek a solution to the problems created by economic globalization and look to culture to escape exclusion. But people have started realizing that globalization itself had a cultural component: Western cultural patterns are invading the whole world through the vehicle of global capitalism. The World Commission on Culture and Development in 1996 recognized that “the international spread of cultural processes is at least as important as that of economic processes” (WCCD 1996, 15). Again, UNESCO

sees in cultural globalization, threatening cultural diversity, a normative vacuum that only the organization can fill. Hence the “mandate” to preserve cultural identity through new global norms.

Culture can no longer be reduced “to a subsidiary position as a mere promoter of economic growth.” The new perspective is that culture is “a desirable end in itself”: it gives “meaning to our existence” (WCCD 1996, 14). Culture relates to quality of life, which is the goal of sustainable development. Sustainable development and the flourishing of culture are now interdependent. Sustainable development is about preserving not only biodiversity, but also cultural diversity. Both are balanced against unregulated economic growth. The “social and cultural fulfillment of the individual” (UNESCO 1998a) is a primary aim of sustainable human development. Because the quality of life has superseded growth as a target, “the cultural dimensions of human life are possibly more essential than growth” (WCCD 1996, 14).

In fact, growth itself is conceived to be not only economic, but also cultural. Cultural creativity is the source of human progress. Cultural growth is associated with fostering “respect for all cultures and for the principle of cultural freedom” (WCCD 1996, 15). One of the most basic human freedoms or choices is “to define our own basic needs” (WCCD 1996, 15). Culture grows through the expansion of human needs and choices—the foundation of the new paradigm.

For some decades now, culture is no longer limited to the arts and letters, but includes “modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” In 1982 the World Conference on Cultural Policies, held in Mexico, had recognized that “in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group” (UNESCO 1998a). Even before the invention of the new paradigm, culture was thus a holistic concept. Since its adoption in the 1990s, the enlargement of culture recognizes the “need to transcend economics, without abandoning it.” Economic growth alone “could not provide a program for human dignity and well-being” (WCCD 1996, 8). UNDP defined human development as “a process of enlarging people’s choices” (WCCD 1996, 8) through empowerment, capacity building, enforcement of human rights, all in the domain of culture. UNESCO thus promotes a cultural movement in favor of a new way of living on earth today that includes new global values transcending national cultures.

Culture has been further enlarged by moving away from “monolithic notions of national culture” to policies “accepting diversity in individual choices and group practices.” Cultural policies “driven by nation-building objectives” are now questioned by “individuals and groups who may not necessarily contest this motivation, yet ask for their more immediate needs to be met first.” The objective of cultural development is to create “an environment that encourages self-expression and exploration on the part of individuals and communities” (WCCD 1996, 41). UNESCO and the global governance partners have taken the lead in recognizing local cultural needs.

The paradox of global governance is that it puts the preservation of identity and the focus on diversity and pluralism in the hands of a globally normative organization, UNESCO. For UNESCO, identity is a value, a right, a responsibility, and an opportunity. But UNESCO’s comparative advantage in culture is global, not local. Together with global civil society, in a circular top-down and bottom-up movement, the agency plays a

determining role in defining a normative global cultural identity. In the era of globalization, national cultures must integrate the values from the global ethic and from global civil society. This trend contradicts self-expression and cultural identity. By seeking to save cultural diversity from economic globalization, a normative global culture is paradoxically constructed.

UNESCO's 1998 Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development states that, on the one hand, "sufficient scope for the flourishing of creative capacities" must be ensured, but on the other the dialogue between cultures and the creation of a global culture are "an essential condition for peaceful coexistence" (UNESCO 1998a). Universal values must be promoted, but cultural diversity must be preserved. This is the dilemma facing the new paradigm. It attempts to resolve the dilemma through a transcending, operational and normative framework of global ethics, but the attempt spits the problem it is trying to solve.

In addition, global cultural policy is managed. According to UNESCO's Action Plan, social engineering mechanisms must multiply to broaden participation in cultural life, promote creative capacity, empower "all people and communities to harness their creativity," "consolidate and forge ways of living together with others," and facilitate "genuine human development and the transition to a culture of peace and non-violence" (UNESCO 1998a). UNESCO requests other UN agencies to mainstream or integrate cultural policy objectives in all their programs.

Such normative work is not a neutral process; it steers the culture of peace in the direction set by the UN and global civil society. Facilitation and empowerment not only are geared to implement an agenda, but they also strengthen global governance. The mechanisms and techniques of global policy could ultimately turn culture into a tool to operationalize the UN agenda. Already at intergovernmental level, global cultural policies integrate the new paradigm, and it is a transforming integration that contradicts the principle of creative diversity. Indeed, the 1998 UNESCO Action Plan states that cultural policies must "respect gender equality" (equal rights), that they should aim "to improve social integration and the quality of life of all members of society without discrimination" (quality of life, nondiscrimination, and the rights approach), and that governments should "endeavour to achieve closer partnerships with civil society in the design and implementation of cultural policies" (governance, partnerships, participatory democracy). Cultural policies should "ensure the full participation on equal terms of all individuals in society" (equity, equality as fundamental values). The policies should be envisioned "simultaneously at the local, national, regional and global levels" (UNESCO 1998a), with the global level being normative (global governance). The culture of peace is founded on respect for diversity, but it tends to impose its norms through a transforming integration that destroys diversity.

The new culture seeks new economic models, as well. The specific cultural situation of a society determines its economic model. To change the current Western production and consumption model, which Gustavo Ospina considers the "heart of all problems," one must "discuss culture in a comprehensive way, and reflect on how education is currently being used today as an instrument of that culture to promote certain values that one must change in order to go forward towards a sustainable future" (Peeters 1999c). Education to new consumption patterns is part of human rights education (in particular equal rights, the rights of future

generations, the rights of the environment). In the West the objective of the new culture is to replace the traditional legal and political cultures with a rights culture. And here we have yet another problem of internal logic in the new paradigm.

A fundamental paradox of the rights culture is its ambivalent position regarding cultural rights. On the one hand, cultural rights have been neglected, and the UN wants to upgrade them. On the other, the promotion of cultural rights (meaning the promotion of cultural diversity) may undermine the construction of a universal culture of rights. UN human rights expert Diana Ayton-Shenker highlights the dilemma: “How can universal human rights exist in a culturally diverse world? As the international community becomes increasingly integrated, how can cultural diversity and integrity be respected? Is a global culture inevitable?” And, “taken to its extreme,” cultural relativism

would pose a dangerous threat to the effectiveness of international law and the international system of human rights that has been painstakingly constructed over the decades. If cultural tradition alone governs State compliance with international standards, then widespread disregard, abuse and violation of human rights would be given legitimacy (Ayton-Shenker 1995).

Just as the global ethic denounces ethical relativism, the Vienna conference, notes Ayton-Shenker, denounces the idea of cultural relativism: “The ‘universal nature’ of all human rights and fundamental freedoms is ‘beyond question.’” A state may no longer dismiss human rights on the basis of cultural relativism. Human rights transcend cultural rights. Ayton-Shenker asserts that “cultural rights . . . are not unlimited. The right to culture is limited at the point at which it infringes on another human right.” Thus, “traditional culture is not a substitute for human rights.” Human rights represent “the hard-won consensus of the international community, not the cultural imperialism of any particular region or set of traditions” (Ayton-Shenker 1995).

But the UN rights culture may use this argument to impose new or reinterpreted rights, a global ethic, and a global culture that relativizes cultural rights. When this is the case, a conflict between the new rights and traditional cultural rights often emerges.

The new culture—the culture of peace—will be a culture of rights, including the new rights. A culture of peace is “a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life” based on respect for life, the rejection of violence in all its forms, commitment to the principles of justice, freedom, tolerance, solidarity, pluralism, “respect for and promotion of the right to development” (UNESCO 1999c).

UNESCO, through various mechanisms and partnerships with NGOs, consumer organizations, schools, parents and children, local communities and authorities, parliaments and national governments, will monitor the implementation of the culture of peace. Annan says that the “backbone of this network of partnerships consists of the international non-governmental organizations associated with UNESCO.” These NGOs, claims Annan, “represent tens of millions of members.” The UN also collaborates with NGOs accredited with ECOSOC or associated with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat (Annan 2000e, 6). To promote the culture of peace, UNESCO also encourages the reform of school

curricula, curriculum materials (particularly history textbooks), teaching methods, pedagogical materials, and textbooks.

Education about a culture of peace will be holistic and participatory—what else? Children, says Annan, “must be involved as much as possible” (Annan 2000e, 3). The culture of peace depends on the strength of the social fabric. Peace is “not only the absence of conflict, but requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation” (UNESCO 1999c). It is necessary to restore to citizens the sense of belonging to the community. “The disintegration of the social fabric,” Federico Mayor said at the second Habitat conference, “and the loss of belonging has diminished our sense of the collective interest and has exacerbated the growth of special interests reflecting class, cultural, religious and corporate allegiances” (Mayor 1996). The loss of community threatens democracy. In reality, the techniques used by the UN system to restore a sense of belonging are themselves often either undemocratic or destructive of basic human communities such as the family, business, and the nation.

Some civil society groups promoting the culture of peace claim that competition, consumerism, the ambition to conquer nature, lust, male domination, domination of one group over another, “despotic, hierarchical and dictatorial” government (Narayan Desai 1999) and centralized and pyramidal structures belong to a culture of violence. People power (peace) is set in opposition to the global market (violence). Radical NGOs view the global capitalist system as a root of violence, exploiting people and the planet for the profit of a few, hence the concepts of “economic violence” and “economic oppression” present in the Manifesto 2000 for a culture of peace and non-violence. The values that inspire a culture of peace are love, fellowship, and comradeship, mutual aid, sharing, caring, consultative decision-making processes, participatory democracy, decentralization, negotiation, arbitration, and positive adjudication instead of war mechanisms.

Once again, the acceptance of other people’s values is the key to the culture of peace. Acceptance is more than tolerance. It means the active internalization of the values of the other. Diversified individual and cultural identities facilitate the understanding of others. Diversity prevents culture from being monolithic and authoritarian: according to Miland Mikhail Hanna, Professor of Structural Engineering at Ain Shams University in Cairo (an expert consulted by UNESCO) if one’s “sense of belonging lies only in one direction,” the thought process “tends to be unilateral and thereby inclined to be fanatical” (Hanna 1999). The more diversified our individual and cultural identity, the more peaceful we will be because we will have internalized the values of the different cultural groups among which we live in the global neighborhood. This is an oversimplified tenet. While a positive attitude toward diversity does favor peace, it must be spontaneous and not engineered. Otherwise a monolithic and authoritarian global culture will result—which is precisely what the culture of peace claims to avoid.

According to a radical viewpoint, the values of peace require curtailing national sovereignty. The culture of peace can flourish only where “the values of a civilian pluralistic society that encourages voluntary work and artistic pursuits” (Hanna 1999) are respected. As Narayan Desai, an Indian non-violence activist put

it and another UNESCO expert, “Each government in the peaceful world will voluntarily relinquish some of its rights in favor of the world community” (Narayan Desai 1999). Institutions in a culture of peace “have to be built from grassroots onwards.” The structure of a peaceful society will be decentralized. It is a society “with most of the executive powers at the grass-roots.” The role of leaders and their power “will be increasingly moral and advisory” (Narayan Desai 1999). In the NGO movement, the linkage between the culture of peace and global governance seems evident. The Global New Left, while intellectually authoritarian, is anarchist in its vision.

Three factors contribute to the creation of a culture of peace, according to Ospina. The first is a new inspiration for those who hold the power, whether economic or political. The second is political will. The third is global participation. Most often the will to achieve the new goals is on the side of civil society, not of those holding power. Governments have a short-term vision. This must change. Those holding the power today have the ethical duty to look at the long term, in other words to follow the example of NGOs. A long-term vision should be the ethic of power. Power holders must also accept to approach issues in their holistic complexity: they must embrace the paradigm as a whole, as a system. The recognition of complexity and long-term planning are two key elements in the exercise of power. The end result will be a collective work, a peace movement, the strengthening of global governance. In brief, the elected must be educated, enlightened, guided and governed by the unelected. This is, indeed, the complete reversal of democratic values, the hijacking of democracy.

The Spiritual Component

The debate on sustainability has introduced in the new paradigm a reflection on religion and spirituality. *Religious* is distinct from *spiritual*. The new paradigm identifies *religious* with formal structures of religion, “whereas you can be very spiritual, and concerned with meaning and purpose without necessarily being a member of a particular church or religious organization.” *Spiritual* relates to “people’s higher sense of meaning in the universe, the philosophical understanding of where they are in space and time, their connection to their past generations, for some where they are going after they die” (Peeters 1998c). In the new paradigm *spiritual* tends to replace *religious*, not only because spirituality is considered more holistic, but also because religions are perceived as strongholds of resistance against some of the values and goals of the new paradigm.

The inclusion of religion and spirituality in the new consensus follows two major trends. The first is genuinely pluralistic and democratic. It invites appointed officials of the major world religions to participate in policy debates, and it respects their identity. This trend is open to taking the views of traditional religion into account. Spirituality is then perceived as deriving from religious traditions. The other trend is radical, and it reverses the hierarchy between spirituality and religion: the new spirituality is said to *transcend* all religions and other spiritualities. The new global humanism that is thereby constructed amounts to a new religion: a religion without God, without revelation or scripture, and without hierarchical religious structures.

These pluralist and radical trends coexist and often overlap, just as genuinely consensual and radical interpretations of sustainable development coexist. They are not always clearly distinguished. Attempts to

introduce the spiritual element in the new paradigm provide a superior justification for its implementation. But in this process the radical trend prevails and distorts the nature of religion. All elements that do not serve or that contradict the goals of sustainability are conveniently left out. Sustainability itself then becomes an immanent religion. The alleged authority of the new spirituality stems from the imperative necessity to survive on earth. The earth, in effect, is addressing an ultimatum to humanity: if the new spirituality is not adopted, we will all perish. The new spirituality thus has the same pessimistic foundations as all the other elements of the new paradigm.

In a sense, earth itself becomes the new deity. There is a name for this: it is called Pantheism. The earth is presented as our common source and end. The new spirituality, in a word, is pagan. The deification of nature permits centering the new spirituality on the *radical equality* of all life forms. The earth is understood as the totality of all life forms, and human beings are reduced to being one mere component of this whole: the earth is a *holistic deity*, in which the parts lose their human or individual identity. At this point, the new spirituality becomes a new religiosity.

The new religiosity is fully compatible with the radical interpretation of the new paradigm, in particular the preservation of the environment as an absolute priority and the right to choose as a way of life. This religiosity is used to prove wrong those who resisted the paradigm on religious grounds: fundamental aspects of the Cairo conference, for instance, are blatantly incompatible with the beliefs and moral norms of major world religions, in particular Christianity and Islam. By attempting to demonstrate the compatibility of religion with the new paradigm, or claiming that the new paradigm is rooted in religious traditions, the new religiosity hijacks religion. This is the self-appointed mission of independent international inter-religious groups such as Religion Counts, which present themselves as a facilitators of change. Religion Counts' Rome Statement on the International Conference on Population and Development argues that world religions share

common moral sensibilities. The different traditions highlight complementary values. In many indigenous faiths there is a comprehensive understanding of the relationship of human beings to the earth; in Hinduism a great appreciation of diversity and tolerance; in Buddhism a deep understanding of suffering and compassion; in Confucianism a powerful awareness of reciprocity and duty in human relationships; in Taoism an enduring emphasis on harmony and balance; in Judaism a profound regard for the sanctity of life; in Christianity a rich understanding of charity and mercy; in Islam a boundless devotion to equality and justice (Religion Counts 1999, 3–4).

The Rome statement adds that all these values “are splendidly expressed in the Programme of Action adopted in Cairo in 1994 at the International Conference on Population and Development” (Religion Counts 1999, 4). The implication is that the Cairo agenda represents the views of all world religions. Of course, this is manipulative. Religion Counts superficially uses language from Cairo and traditional religious texts to prove compatibility, without getting down to the underlying anthropological vision and moral teaching of world religions.

The logic of this group calls for understanding people's values to benefit people. In fact, they reinterpret people's values in the light of Cairo: they assume that the anthropological vision and values of Cairo are universal. "Understanding people's values" in fact means inculcating in them the values of the paradigm through awareness raising and participation. Traditional religions then become subject to the superior or transcending values of the new consensus, which itself becomes the new religion. As a result two incompatible worldviews now claim universality, and this incompatibility will not be solved by consensus building, although that is what groups like Religion Counts are trying to do. Where the new global norms are incompatible with tradition, the partners either deny this incompatibility or religious traditions are rejected as intolerant. The hidden strategic aim of the radical worldview is to install a new order that harmonizes all spiritual traditions and destroys genuine religious identity.

To reach that goal, awareness raising and sensitization campaigns inside religious groups are key tactics. These programs demonstrate that the objectives of the global conferences and their teaching are mutually supportive. Religious leaders eventually must become partners, multipliers of the agenda, and preach the new paradigm as good and religiously grounded to educate people in their new responsibilities. The moral power of religion, thus hijacked, becomes instrumental in the implementation of the agenda.

Religious opposition to the agenda is contested on the grounds of human rights, especially environmental rights, equal rights, the right to participation, reproductive and sexual rights and the right to choose. According to the radical view, religious constraints prevent people from acting as responsible and autonomous beings. In the forward movement, non-authoritarian forms of religious leadership are supposedly replacing hierarchical religion. Religions face a choice: either they agree with the agenda and become an active partner of the system, or face rejection. The latter alternative has been exemplified in the campaign organized by an independent non-profit organization claiming to work in the Catholic social justice tradition, Catholics for a Free Choice, to remove the Vatican's observer status at the UN. If the logic of the trend is pushed to its end, namely, juridical enforcement, an openly conflictual situation between the upholders of the right to religious identity and those of the new controversial agendas will surely result.

The new paradigm, as we have mentioned several times, is dynamically holistic. It is, in other words, powerfully driven to reach out to new components and integrate its norms into all aspects of human life at the individual, social, and global levels. As far as spirituality is concerned, the holistic logic means, on the one hand, that spirituality must be mainstreamed in the new consensus and, on the other, that the values of the new consensus must be integrated in spirituality. Once again we have a perfectly circular process. The Global New Left "partners" have hijacked not only democracy, but also religion.

The individual, the community, the world, the UN are all perceived as wholes either having or needing a spiritual component. Diane Dillon-Ridgley, former member of the President's Council for Sustainable Development and executive director of the Women's Environment and Development Organization, illustrates this point: "As a person, I am a compilation of my spiritual base, the private sector work I have done, my engagement with government, my grounding in the NGO movement" (Peeters 1999e). The individual is a whole, with a spiritual component. The spiritual component is in balance with social

commitments and other components of one's personality. The logic then moves from the individual to the community. Spirituality is necessary to "make community, and community as a verb, not as a noun." The global community itself, she continues, "has a spiritual self. It has a business, manufacturer private self; it has a self that is clearly dedicated and understanding of esthetics and beauty" (Peeters 1999e).

The promoters of the new spirituality are aware that the integration of spirituality in the new paradigm has not yet formally taken place at the intergovernmental level. However, parallel groups have experienced significant breakthroughs. The spiritual movement took off at Rio. Several ecofeminist groups issued declarations of a spiritual tenor. Hanne Strong, Maurice Strong's wife, founded the Wisdom Keepers. Members of the group are spiritual advisors to several high-ranking UN officials. The group met again at the Istanbul city summit. Wally N'Dow, the summit secretary-general, said that the second habitat conference benefited from the advice of spiritual leaders more than any other UN conference: the "spiritual element is the only ingredient that can bind us together" (Peeters 1996c).

Various institutes and NGOs—such as the Center for Respect of Life and the Environment created in 1986 in Washington—have continued to work on the spiritual dimension of sustainability. The relationship between spirituality and ecology is formally studied in academia. The World Bank's Spiritual Enfoldment Society, formed in March 1993 by Richard Barrett, promotes personal development and spiritual renewal among the Bank's staff. It organized a conference that became an associated event of the Third Annual Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Development and addressed the issues from the perspectives of ethic and spiritual values—"a new departure" (Serageldin and Barrett 1996, v) for the World Bank. In 1998, WHO brought together adherents of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism to start exploring the connection between health and spirituality. The agency is becoming aware that

people who belong to social organizations, whether they are religious or whether they are other social networks, . . . tend to have better physical outcomes. So we can't anymore compartmentalize the physical, and focus on it without also focusing on the social, mental or spiritual determinants of health (Peeters 1998c; quoting Derek Yach).

The millennium NGO forum also encompassed the spiritual dimension in the recognition that "people all over the world are connected to their religious and spiritual lives." They are "moved by their spiritual core, their moral framework, the values that guide their lives, and it would be naive of us—and it would be an impoverished agenda—if we didn't recognize this and bring that energy, that positive motivation forward" (Peeters 1999e). Another attempt to integrate the "global soul" in the paradigm was the World Peace Summit, which took place in New York at the end of August 2000, at the initiative of Ted Turner. The hope was to form a permanent group of spiritual leaders to advise UN decision-makers, but the initiative was unsuccessful. Formal governmental entities have not yet "captured" and "highlighted" the spiritual connection. Here again, NGOs and the UN are exercising leadership. They participate more in the integration

of spirituality in global governance than do formal religious and governmental structures: another proof, if needed, of the paradigm's lack of transparency.

The Wisdom Keepers are a good example of such hijacking. Hanne Strong explained that the purpose of the Wisdom Keepers was "to bring another perspective to governments" (Peeters 1996c). Politicians do not have time for reflection. The Wisdom Keepers are "people who have wisdom: they have spent years contemplating the problems of the world." At Rio, Wisdom Keepers issued a Declaration of the Sacred Earth Gathering stating that "we must adopt a renewed respect for the superior law of Divine Nature. Nature does not depend on human beings and their technology. It is human beings who depend on Nature for survival." The universe is sacred "because all is one" (holism itself as a religion). The root of many world problems is "the common perception of the self as I, not as part of nature." Wisdom Keepers agree with the supporters of the Earth Charter that anthropocentrism is not sustainable; all life forms are equal. As we have seen, the new spirituality extends the equity principle to nature. Humanity and all forms of life are interdependent: holistic interdependence is no longer people-centered, but is extended to nature.

The new spirituality of sustainability advocates the oneness of all faiths, and it implores religions to agree on the primacy of sustainability and respect for all life forms. The new spirituality is marked by a sense of urgency, by the idea that time is running out on us, and that if we want to save the future, we must imperatively find answers to global problems today. This sense of urgency is reflected in the Rio Wisdom Keepers' declaration: "The world community must act speedily with vision and resolution to preserve the Earth and humanity from disaster. The time is now. Now or never" (Peeters 1996c).

According to the new spiritualism, modern society misses the spiritual connection with Mother Earth, which has been preserved in indigenous cultures. Progress is redefined in terms of the quality of life and spirituality, not any longer in terms of improving living standards. Economic development should contribute to the evolution of consciousness, or else it has no purpose. Barrett explains what he means by the evolution of consciousness:

Religious and spiritual beliefs throughout the ages stress the importance of recognizing the interdependence of humanity and all life forms. There are five values that lead to this unity of understanding: respect for all life, equality of all souls, importance of the common good, responsibility for the whole, and unconditional caring. When we fully express these values as individuals and in our organizations, our lives will change (Serageldin and Barrett 1996, 28).

Secular spirituality, according to John Hoyt, the President of the Center for Respect of Life and Environment and the Chief Executive Officer of the Humane Society of the United States is "the ability to see the sacred in the other, whomever or whatever it may be" (Hoyt 1997-98, 5-6). It is immanent and originates in the human mind and the needs of the earth. People must be a party to the evolution of human ideas. We must, according to Ismail Serageldin, "negotiate our future, our survival." Citizens must be "awakened" and "enlightened." Like Prometheus, they "create the future in their mind" (Peeters 1996d).

According to Hoyt, to be a “spiritually grounded person does not finally depend upon belief in a theistic being, but rather on an openness to be motivated and directed by something other than self-centered considerations.” A secular spirituality, he continues, “can more readily embrace a concern for the well-being of the larger biosphere than can a person-centered spirituality, which is frequently so preoccupied with an otherworldly salvation that we do not give due consideration to the quality of life we are helping to foster in the here and now, not to mention future generations.” That the major world religions focus on otherworldly salvation “does not bode well for the Earth or the Earth Community” (Hoyt 1997–1998, 5–6). But by moving away from people-centeredness and religion’s transcendental dimension to secularism, the new spirituality further consolidates the collectivist aspect of the new paradigm.

Dr. Jim Garrison, president of the State of the World Forum that independently partook in the UN millennium events, goes even further by arguing that “the days of dogmatic religion are on the wane.” He finds exciting that spirituality today is “disengaged from religion.” Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, he says, have done “real damage to the planet because they have too many answers.” He prefers to “live in the questions.” From inquiry we learn tolerance: “It is out of answers that we get dogmatic. . . violent and destructive with each other.” He claims history is moving beyond dogma. He believes that Christian truths are partial. God is “God of the whole, not of the parts.” Violence is engendered when one mistakes the part for the whole. He wants to say to traditional Jews, Christians, and Moslems that their “box is too small, get into a bigger box” (Garrison 1998). “The global crisis of the spirit and search for meaning” are among “the deepest issues around the world today.” Malaise has developed because people find the dogmas of their childhood irrelevant to the present. In the era of global communications, “you have to have a mentality and a spirituality that encompasses the totality of all of the relationships that you have. I have to treat you as an equal. . . If my theology is an impediment I have to get rid of my theology.” Garrison says the state of the world forum is about honoring the mavericks and the heretics: “During times of transition, orthodoxies fall and the heretics and the mavericks are the people creating the new orthodoxy. We’re in one of these precious moments when we get to think out of the box” (Garrison 1998).

Garrison’s language makes it explicit that holism as a spirituality entails a radical emptying of the content of faith of traditional religions’ on the one hand, and dogmatic global imposition of an undefined “whole” on the other. Holism has become a new dogmatic religion, a religion founded on apostasy and unprecedented intolerance of religious traditions. Garrison however does not seem to see that. The contradiction of his spiritual system is that the process of encompassing all traditions into a whole in fact destroys these traditions from within and leaves nothing standing. All he does is create a vacuum: holism as a religion is vacuous. He criticizes religions for providing answers, but forgets that the goal of the new spirituality and of holism as a religion is to seek and find global solutions to global problems.

The promoters of the new spirituality generally deny any connection to the New Age galaxy. The New Age movement has failed to provide a rational synthesis. Fuzzy and eccentric, the New Age is not politically usable. The new spirituality, by contrast, is perfectly in line with the political concept of sustainable development and global governance and is therefore usable. Yet the new spirituality has the same gnostic

character of the New Age, even if Hanne Strong claims that the Wisdom Keepers have “nothing to do with the New Age at all.” Each Wisdom Keeper indeed comes from

a major religious tradition, unbroken lineages . . . going back to the beginning of times. The New Age is when you start mixing everything together, you take a little bit of this and a little bit of that. If you are going to be enlightened, if you are going to reach the highest level of spiritual understanding and wisdom, you have to go with a straight lineage that takes you step by step: you can't mix it up, otherwise it is going to confuse you (Peeters 1996c).

The Wisdom Keepers do not take a little bit of this and a little bit of that, but they do eventually come to a consensus on the immanence of nature. In other words, the consensus they reach necessarily transcends religious traditions. Inevitably then, the Wisdom Keepers' consensus process leads to a loss of religious identity. This is dangerous mainly because people may not always see it.

Although it will always be denied, the New Age movement and the UN new consensus do in fact share fundamental characteristics, to such an extent that one may wonder whether the consensus, in its most radical aspects, has not been driven by the spirit of the New Age. One common characteristic is the idea that human civilization has been going through a great cultural revolution and transformation. New Agers believe that the transformation results from pseudo-mystical happenings, whereas the partners plainly make it happen through social engineering policies. The UN system and the New Age believe that there must be a rupture with the former Judeo-Christian or monotheistic paradigm to create an “inclusive” one. Both agree that the transformation will be from an institutional, top-down system to a people-centered one. *A new paradigm, balance, integration and enlargement, total well-being, quality of life, holism, a new global peace, harmony* among many other expressions are their common aims and vocabulary.

They both hold, too, that the crisis is so grave that our survival is at stake. New Agers say that the current pathology and brokenness are an opportunity to change; global governance partners assert that the state of the environment forces us to change our lifestyles. According to both systems, we are becoming global citizens. Decentralization, networking, and horizontalism are essential. The New Age defines itself as a powerful leaderless network while the UN extends its partnership with all global citizens groups (power) and claims that global governance is not global government (no leaders). The ideas of consensus, awareness raising and clarification of values are also common to the New Age and the UN system. New Agers believe that a critical number of people will become aware of deep global transformations due to cosmic changes and will thereby bring about a new consensual paradigm. The UN system does it the other way around: the consensus generally comes first and is followed by awareness raising. The age that we are entering is an age of knowledge, information, and communication. The New Age gnosis stems from an unprecedented trust in the human brain, with resources that must be tapped for a new collective enlightenment. The UN is promoting the horizontal exchange of information, best practices, use of the Internet, humanity's brain. *Knowledge* is redefined as an expansion of one's consciousness, not as certitudes rooted in an authoritative source. The

education reform orchestrated by UNESCO demonstrates that teachers are no longer considered the holders of knowledge but must encourage students to discover their own potentialities. Both systems eschew dogma, explicitly or pragmatically, and speak of tolerance as one of their highest values: in fact, both proclaim the dogma that we have to get rid of dogma and adopt their values—a clear attempt, at this point, to hijack people’s souls through militant secularism and unprecedented Promethean pride.

6

Closing the Circle

In the past decade the Global New Left agenda has been the driving force of the quiet revolution. The UN system is redefining its relationship with business at a moment when the UN finds it increasingly difficult to maintain the momentum and the credibility of a paradigm that is supposed to reflect a global consensus, but is in fact predicated on pursuing special interests. The response of business to the UN initiative will influence the sustainability of the new paradigm in a decisive way. The future of the cultural revolution is at stake. The paradigm now stands between consuming its radicalization and imploding, or finding its true balance in democratic values and processes and undergoing fundamental changes. The attempt to co-opt business in the implementation of UN goals, the debate on cultural identity, the role of sovereign governments and their present passive acceptance of the institutionalization of global governance, the UN's continued assertion of global normative power are the factors that will determine the future. This final chapter focuses on this critical variable. As the paradigm closes its own circle and finalizes the explicitation of its goals, a number of practical conclusions are also in order. The time has come to get back to reality and let each individual citizen, family, enterprise, school, culture, religion, and nation responsibly exercise their right to choose in function of their own values.

Partnership with Business

The paradigm's stand vis-à-vis the market is illustrated by Rubens Ricupero's February 1999 analysis of the agreement known as the *Washington consensus*. Economist John Williamson, recalls Ricupero, secretary-general of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), had summarized what he called the "accepted wisdom by all serious economists" and defined the development paradigm that has been hegemonic in the past in terms of free trade, financial liberalization and sound macroeconomic policies (low inflation, minimal budget deficits, balanced external accounts). The Washington consensus also advocated privatization and the reduction of the role of the state "to essential tasks, deregulation and connected matters." The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, claims Ricupero, have enforced these principles in a top-down manner since the late 1980s. But he notes that a new paradigm is emerging that is "more diversified," "more balanced," "bottom-up," "less dogmatic," and also less orthodox—in other words, more relevant to our times. This new paradigm results from a combination of three alternatives to the Washington consensus. One is UNDP's human development paradigm, or people-centered sustainable development. This approach, says Ricupero, emphasizes people's participation, the quality of life, education and health, as opposed to the accumulation of capital, increased economic productivity, and economic growth: in brief, the values of the new UN paradigm. Ricupero acknowledges that UNDP's human development paradigm is "still relatively

weak on the economic fundamentals, that is, on how to have a productive underpinning that would allow a country really to adopt the social policies that the human development concept advocates” (Ricupero 1999). Ricupero thus distinguishes himself as a master of understatement. It is paradoxical that the UN agency mandated to promote development could be weak on economic realities and the requirements of real growth.

The second alternative is the one coming from World Bank President Jim Wolfensohn. It is called the “comprehensive strategic framework for development.” This framework, says Ricupero, “embodies a number of different aspects, including some that are meta-economic, such as institutional, legal and good governance aspects. It is curious,” he continues, “that many of these elements are aimed at reinforcing the State, thus reversing the recent trend that preached a reduction in the role of the State” (Ricupero 1999). The third approach, that of UNCTAD, tries to combine the experience of East Asian countries with the traditional Latin American approach of the “historic-structuralist school” coming from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and to “adapt the lessons from this experience to the economies of Africa or the least developed countries” (Ricupero 1999).

The old paradigm long ignored the environmental dimension, the role of women and minorities, ethnic history and identity, human rights, and values. The new paradigm pretends to reconcile apparently contradictory extremes, such as the role of the State and the market, price stability and economic growth, flexibility of the labor market and job security, or integration into the world economy and the building up of a national industrial base (Ricupero 1999). The new paradigm, then, as Ricupero sees it, is not yet finalized. It should integrate the complexity and diversity of the components of development in various countries. The new consensus must be “built on the need for balance, equilibrium and a sense of proportion” (Ricupero 1999). Formally antagonistic and exclusive positions must now be made mutually reinforcing and complementary. This shift from material growth to human development requires a consensus on new values that transcend those of the market, and a focus on diversity. It also requires a multistakeholder approach and diversified partnerships.

When Kofi Annan assumed his post as secretary-general, he declared that he wanted to strengthen cooperation with all nonstate actors. He thereby made clear his intention to move forward and even beyond boundaries imposed by the statutory nature of his mandate and the mandate of the United Nations—an organization of member-states, not of multiple stakeholders. The conference process had already firmly established the UN partnership with NGOs which shaped the conceptual framework of the new paradigm and structured new governance mechanisms. The UN system is now reaching out to other and less natural partners, the most important being the business community. Business was an outsider or even an enemy when the paradigm was forged, but it is now being pressed to become a major and direct partner in its implementation. “Confrontation has taken the back seat to cooperation. Polemics has given way to partnerships,” according to Annan (Annan 1999e).

In the first stage of the long and often covert global governance process, the partners’ strategy had been to set their agenda, obtain on their goals an intergovernmental consensus, consolidate their own bases, create powerful parallel networks, mainstream the rights approach, establish new global social and

environmental norms, formulate a global ethic, streamline the UN and obtain the UN Secretariat's full collaborative support. The world organization reserved interactive participation in normative activity to its primary partners, mainly powerful international NGOs. Business was a stakeholder, but certainly not a partner. Georg Kell from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General recognizes that the UN, until recently "really had a problem. . .with the business community" (Peeters 1999b). The UN system needed a new strategy toward the private sector. Simply put, if the partners wanted to close the circle and build global governance successfully, market forces—the most powerful player in development—had to be engaged and won over to the cause of the UN system.

The secretary-general, not the general assembly, initiated the search for a partnership with business. In doing so, he has "clearly exercised leadership, and the UN agencies are just pleased to follow." The partnership with business is now on the agenda of all UN agencies, funds, and programs. The Secretariat labels the mainstreaming of business "issue networking" and "issue leadership" (Peeters 1999b).

Before engaging in a partnership with the UN, business should raise and resolve fundamental questions. Has the UN really changed its antimarket attitude? Is business ready to follow the movement and accept the secretary-general as the self-mandated executive of the UN system? If a partnership with business is achieved, what will be the terms or framework of the new relationship? Are governments, political parties and other representative institutions of the UN initiative aware of its implications and willing to follow suit? Is business willing to consider UN values as corporate values and to integrate them in business practice?

The partners' exclusion of business from civil society, and the relationship of the private sector with the UN, has rested on the assumption that the UN and the NGOs have always been on the side of what is humanistic and right, serving the global humanity and not themselves, while business has remained exclusively on the side of self-interest, using mechanisms and incentives fundamentally hostile to the new paradigm and to the common good. This assumption mirrored the basic Marxist dogma that profit and business are intrinsically evil. The strategy of the partners has deliberately posited an ethical vacuum on the side of business. But such a vacuum never did and does not now exist. Corporate management and business governance not only have their own ethical norms based on responsibility, creativity, the rule of law, honesty, and competence, but business management by and large conforms to basic and universal human values. Free enterprise is by nature a social service. The market performs a socially vital activity, and this activity is real and ethical. Every business organization belongs to the human community. It is itself a basic human community, belonging by nature and by right to civil society.

Presenting business as exclusively pursuing competition and profit allows the UN to appropriate moral leadership and implement that leadership in global governance. Holding a pretended monopoly on global values, the UN claims a mandated right to normative powers and consequently bestows on itself the privilege of establishing the terms of collaboration with business and global governance. The UN has no such right nor has it received the mandate of replacing our traditional values with its own values.

In the framework of its new relationship with business, the UN system and its partners have not abandoned their basic antimarket bias. They still consider profit and competition to be incompatible with the

objectives of the UN system. The core of the system's position vis-à-vis the private sector remains ideological and pessimistic. The UN continues to uphold its self-made image as an idealistic, humanitarian undertaking, existing to serve the global common good. It still claims to approach human concerns from an essentially different perspective than the market. Annan's initiative of a global partnership with business has thus created, not a new perspective in the debate of ethics versus profit, but a new strategy.

In the past UN-business relationships were locked in conflict, without any possibility of effective cooperation. The new strategy postulates a practical compromise. The UN-business partnership does not mean that the UN will internalize, own, and promote market principles and values. But the UN system finally yielded to necessity and now formally upholds the evidence that the market has been and will continue to be the main actor of development. The new strategy highlights that "the world is no longer in an ideological battle about the right economic approach to development. The issues of today are *pragmatic* in nature" (emphasis added). The UN avows that market capitalism has no "major ideological rival" (Peeters 1999b; quoting Kell). But this admission does not mean that the ideological conflict that opposes the UN partners and the market has disappeared simply because the former do not advocate an ideology to replace free enterprise. As long as the business enterprise is excluded from civil society, the claim that there is no ideological conflict between the UN and the market cannot be true.

The UN system consequently redefines its relationship with the market. The challenge of globalization, as it is perceived in the new strategy, is not to stop the expansion of the global market, but the inequity in spreading the opportunities and rewards of globalization "when the market goes too far in dominating social and political outcomes" (UNDP 1999a, 2). But what does the UN system mean by "dominating"? When does the market go "too far"? The answer to these two questions remains what it has been in the past decade: dogmatic and coming from a global perspective. The UN system means to address the evils of globalization still attributed to market forces (exclusion, exploitation, inequity, insecurity, degradation of the environment, child labor, discrimination, destructiveness and so on). The new doctrine is that sustainable development requires growth on the one hand (business) and equity on the other (UN and NGOs). As Carol Bellamy, UNICEF Executive Director, put it,

business and industry are driven by the profit motive—as they should be and must be, both for their shareholders and their employees. The work of the UN, on the other hand, is driven by a set of ethical principles that sustain its mission... Just as the private sector is not embarrassed by the fact that it is driven by profits, the UN is hardly self-conscious that its work grows out of underlying ethical principles (Bellamy 1999).

The Secretary-General recognizes the material and economic benefits of globalization: "faster economic growth, higher living standards, accelerated innovation and diffusion of technology and management skills, new economic opportunities for individuals and countries alike" (Annan 2000c). But he reserves to the UN system moral authority, the values which are its core strength and the only real power it

wields. In its own way, the UN initiative is a kind of *historical compromise*, currently being constructed, between the market, the UN, and NGOs. The partnership now proposed to business is a formula for coexistence. Both the UN and the market will retain their opposite identities, but recognize that a certain complementarity of roles does exist and that an operational division of labor would permit a workable partnership.

The conditions of this partnership are unevenly distributed between the UN and the private sector: the market must perform and conform; the task of the UN is to inform, set the norms of ethical conformity, and manage and monitor the norms' implementation. The market is defined in terms of material power, the UN in terms of global ethical governance. The UN Secretariat could hardly devise a more ambitious pretension to world governance. Measuring its scope (extending horizontally to the entire UN system, the private sector, governments, labor, the NGOs, all stakeholders) exposes the vanity of its claim.

The partners use various ways to give apparent substance to the vapoing. The first and basic line of defence of the terms of the partnership is ideological. It consists in dwelling in ideology where achievements are the real issue. Moral authority is not debatable and it allegedly belongs to the UN system. To perform is the part of the partnership assigned to the private sector. The focus on ethics and norms permits to rely on moral power and agitation, and dispenses at first from insisting on visible outcomes and a quantified auditing of programs. In the gap between idealistic description of norms—the UN part of the deal—and realizations—the substance of the partnership which the market is asked to perform—lies the true vacuum that presently requires a great debate.

Another beguiling argument used by the UN system to promote its new relationship with the market is that the business sector should recognize its own need for a partnership. The UN system claims that business needs open, constructive and complementary relations with the UN, just as itself needs the private sector. The UN Secretariat first argues that the need for a partnership with business springs from practical necessity—the globalization of markets, technology, information, and finance. Globalization, says Annan, is “defining new realities, reshaping our notions of sovereignty and challenging us to reconsider many of the assumptions that have guided policy-making until now” (Annan 1999g). States were once responsible for establishing and enforcing rules to regulate the market, but a global society and global problems demand global values and norms. “In the last resort it is common values that hold every society together, and what we are talking about is really a global society. Moreover, every society must have a language; the language of global society is international law” (Annan 2000a).

The UN also argues that the partnership is not only necessary for business, but also mutually profitable. The UN draws a long list of benefits that the market owes to UN governance. UN activities contribute “to making business operations more viable” (Peeters 1999b; quoting Kell). By this, Annan means that the UN provides the private sector with “values, stability, services” (Annan 1999d). The UN supplies the soft infrastructure of the global economy by developing norms and standards for trade laws, customs procedures, aviation, shipping, telecommunications, consumer protection and intellectual property rights. In addition, UN activities in development cooperation, education, social equity, and respect for human rights are “preparing the ground for business to invest.” The UN has facilitated the participation of business in pursuing

the goals of the global conferences by dealing with the “down-side of globalization” (poverty, transnational crimes, money laundering, drug trafficking) and, by doing so, “indirectly strengthens a market-based approach.” Furthermore, “the work of the UN in peace-making and in post conflict peace-building is crucial to enhance business activities”: without peace the market cannot do business. UN values (such as freedom, justice, social progress, equality, tolerance and dignity) are “the cornerstone of an interdependent world” (Peeters 1999b, quoting Kell). Business relies on trust-based relationships built on those values.

This win-win catalogue is not a verified account of UN performance: much of it may be materially true, except UN self-attribution. On the one hand, the UN caricaturally casts itself in the role of visionary, awareness-raiser, owner, facilitator and executive of global ethic. On the other, it appropriates the benefits that business—and every citizen—draw from democratic governance: the rule of law, the democratic process as a vast network of open, constructive and complementary relationships that exist between all actors and social stakeholders. The environment of peace and order set up at great cost by human creativity over long periods of history is the framework in which the UN itself operates, indeed a proof that there is common ground and strategic convergence of purposes among the various components of the human community, but this commonality is not the fruit of radical idealism. In other words, the UN system hijacks the democratic process by means of a dialectical mix of continuity with our historical democratic past and revolutionary change: it claims devolution in its favor of our democratic past and concentrates on social engineering to implement its own values. The UN entangles democracy and free market with its own agenda. It confuses image (the democratic process) and caricature (the new paradigm).

Because of this confusing entanglement, nothing on either side of the proposed partnership of business and the UN system is sheer black and white. This makes it hard for all concerned to discern the true image of positive change and disentangle it from its UN-constructed caricature. The low profile lately adopted by the UN system increases this difficulty. The UN’s awareness of the limits of what it can achieve has inspired a number of semantic changes in UN language such as “new universalism” (to limit WHO’s interventions to support what the member states are willing and able to do), “stewardship” (sometimes replacing “governance,” which implies a claim to rule), or “added value” (to indicate that the UN system has no ambition other than to be useful and to contribute something to the common good according to its “comparative advantage”).

In the new relationship with the market, the emphasis as mentioned is on *pragmatism*. There are two sides in pragmatism. The good side is that pragmatism imposes a confrontation of norms and operational goals with reality. Reality concerns not only the feasibility but also—and mainly—the common sense legitimacy of programs of action. Is legitimate a pragmatic strategy that conforms to democratic realities and processes. Insofar as its goals and activities are imbued by radicality the UN-business partnership initiative is neither feasible nor legitimate. The bad side of pragmatism is to be schizophrenic by passively and conveniently accepting the coexistence of two perspectives that remain fundamentally opposed and makes us live in two worlds. This coexistence is not sustainable. Sooner or later individuals, constituted groups and society itself have to make a choice. Either the boomerang effect of reality on leftist idealism leads to a positive

reassessment of our national purpose and divisive coexistence ends by conscious democratic choice, or the refusal to choose accelerates the drift toward further radicalisation and more divisiveness to produce a self-induced, unsustainable confrontation of two societies within each unit of governance, culture and nation. As the circle is closing on the alleged consensus of the past decade, choosing between idealism and reality becomes increasingly stark. For better or for worse, we must all choose.

Radicalism contains the seeds of self-destruction *by implosion*. The proposed UN-market partnership contradicts the radical antimarket logic that has so far driven the partners' movement forward. For the radicals, the partnership is revisionist. They have serious misgivings concerning the UN initiative and hold that coexistence is a pragmatic compromise that could damage the UN image and harm the forward movement towards global governance on the terms set by the leftist agenda. For the part of the business sector that is willing to go along with the UN initiative, the partnership appears to offer a waiting area. Market pragmatism promotes a wait-and-see attitude as preferable to declared and open confrontation, particularly if one can reasonably expect that leftist extremism will blow over and become tame if business makes unsubstantial compromises. But this expectation is unreasonable. NGOs are watching. Appeasement never pays. The logic of the UN initiative will unfold in ever enlarging scope until the objective of total commitment of business organizations to and manageability by the UN system is achieved to its satisfaction.

The logic of the UN initiative also rules the role that governments are to play in its implementation. The UN recognizes that governments have the main responsibility for implementing global values. But the initiative contradicts itself on this point, for it principally consists in establishing a *direct* link to corporations to have them embrace and translate into practice UN norms and processes. Because they sit on the fence or passively concur, governments are not truly proactive. Contrary to the Charter, they permit the UN system to use the resulting vacuum to establish a direct and interactive link with civil society and the private sector, impose its values and agenda on business and thereby consolidate global governance.

As far as the UN is concerned, it is satisfied with the past UN-business confrontation taking the back seat. It rationalizes its pragmatic cooperativeness with the private sector by the *deus ex machina* concept of balance it has used all along in the enlargement of its role: balance between profit-making and the implementation of the paradigm, business power and universal ethic, private interest and global interest. But it yields no ground on the alleged UN privilege as the only existing global community. It absolutizes its claim to moral leadership.

It is bizarre but highly significant that the determining factor in the UN partnership with business is not economic development—the specific task of the business partner—, but the values of the paradigm. There can be no doubt that the partnership is offered to business organizations on UN terms alone. Its goal is business participation in the implementation of UN social norms. Development proper is not the objective of the proposed partnership, as it is in the Charter, but social engineering. The outcome is a contradiction that is built-in and potentially implosive. The UN system exceeds its mandated authority, and at the same time, it reduces its mission to its radical agenda and thus fails to implement its true mandate. Any truly open and holistic definition of the UN's original mandate cannot admit radical reductionism in any form.

The UN initiative has sharpened the issues that create an irreducible situation of confrontation between the system and business. As said, the world organization's thesis is that globalization is highly fragile and unsustainable. Although no longer threatened by outside forces, market capitalism is allegedly endangered internally by its own amorality. The claim that the market is amoral clearly indicates that the UN ideology has not really changed its antimarket and pessimistic stance. As there has been a forward movement, a demographic transition, a health revolution, there now exists a *social responsibility movement*. The paradigm first presented human rights, in particular women's rights, population control and environmental protection as alternatives to doom. The UN initiative now perceives global social responsibility as an alternative to business disaster: street riots, inequality, unemployment, environmental degradation, social exclusion and unrest. The Secretary-General's reasoning is that business is incapable, by itself, of producing and enforcing the global values it needs for its own survival. In Annan's judgment, if capitalism cannot produce "prosperity and justice, it will not have succeeded" (Annan 1998b). This judgment of the pretended failure of the market rests on undefined referents: What are prosperity, justice, and success if not relative concepts? No country or system ever achieves absolute prosperity, perfect equity, and sustainable success; no matter what, Annan's sophistic truism can claim a measure of evidence: everywhere there is poverty, there is inequity, there is unsustainability. But the doom-talk is constructivist cant. So is the bland assertion concerning the natural amorality of business.

The corporate responsibility movement also defines itself in relation to two fundamental imbalances. The first is "between the strictly economic sphere, and the broader framework of shared values and practices within which the economic sphere has been embedded at the national level. The second imbalance is in the international governance structures" (Kell and Ruggie 1999). The corporations that are now transnational, major actors of economic development, were at first national. The market has prospered and grown in a framework of national values. Due to globalization and the growing role of transnational corporations, the market has become global and lost the foundation of national civic values and practices. It now needs to be embedded in a new framework of global norms. In other words, "just as national markets reflect the values, laws and rules of a given society, so must the new economy be guided by an international consensus on values and principles" (Annan 2000a). A global economy and society cannot be built "simply on the principle of 'live and let live' in the sense of letting each State enforce its own orthodoxy on all its citizens" (Annan 2000a). In a global economy, it is necessary to apply at the global level what has been taken for granted at the national level, and to promote a sense of global citizenship. "One of the great tragedies of our era is that politics remain local while market and problems have gone global" (Kell 2000). On the other hand, the market has governance structures (such as WTO) that are robust and global rules that are enforceable and working in its favor, while the objectives and values promoted by the UN system and programs (poverty eradication, human rights, environmental protection, labor standards) are not enforceable to the same extent. As the market responds to demand, not to need, it will not create norms concerning human rights and environmental protection. The way to overcome this identity crisis is to integrate universal values into corporate practices, and to create a global structure to rule over business. Hence the seemingly simple and brilliant formula of uniting the power of

the market with UN governance, the two pillars of the new system.

The ideological and pessimistic perspective that dominated the quiet revolution from its inception employs the recent events in Seattle, Prague, Geneva and Nice as unmistakable evidence of an impending antimarket backlash. At the fall 1999 WTO talks in Seattle, citizens' groups and labor unions joined forces and made it visible that trade and multinational corporations had become the target of civil society activists. They interpreted the failure of the Seattle conference as a historic step in their struggle against the market. Their translation is partial and needs correction. The tactical achievement of demonstrating on the street violent repulsion against globalization and the market concealed staggering strategic losses for leftist radicalism and indeed for the UN system as it has operated in the past decade. If they claim that Seattle was a victory, it was surely a Pyrrhic victory.

First, the events caused a formal change in the way the UN system perceives globalization. The UN now recognizes the necessity to revise the prevalently negative popular concept of globalization. The resulting change in perspective places the UN in the vanguard of revisionism. The present doctrine of the Secretariat is that "globalization continues to serve as a convenient platform for all sorts of irrational reactions and as a scapegoat to advance narrow interests, both for social movements of all colours and for policy makers on both extreme ends of the old political spectrum" (Kell 2000). The irrational reaction attributed to businesses is to accept living with the fear of a rollback, "if not a crushing end to globalization" while hesitating to take the step of reconnecting with society and building the pillars they need to be sustainable: to free themselves of this fear is the principal reason why corporations should join the partnership initiative (Kell 2000).

The idea of calling on the international business community to act in enlightened self-interest and exploit its basic strengths is not, however, in the line of the antimarket activists. The new UN stance opposing irrational rejectionist posturing against globalization, multinational corporations and free enterprise is a revealing outcome of the Seattle crisis. The strategy of trying to change corporate conduct and policies by "naming and shaming" corporations for their misdeeds, confrontation, provocation, consumer boycotts has yielded to another approach: that of strategic partnerships making corporations "advocates for broader societal concerns" (Kell and Ruggie 1999). In a damage-limited move, the UN official discourse is that only "smaller and/or more radical single issue NGOs" believe that the UN has entered into a "Faustian bargain" with the market; in reverse, the "larger and more transnationalized NGOs have concluded that a strategy of 'constructive engagement' will yield better results than confrontation" (Kell and Ruggie 1999). It remains to be seen whether these partnerships, still at an early stage of development, will "evolve into lasting structures for bridging social and business interests" (Kell and Ruggie 1999).

The other and main area of potential conflict between radical NGOs and the UN system in the after-Seattle situation concerns developing countries. First the Seattle show was dominated by Northern NGOs and unions, and the voice of developing countries was not heard. Second, activists rallied against exploitation and environmental destruction in developing countries and ignored the twin facts that underdevelopment is the main cause of human rights violation and environmental degradation, and that trade and investment can contribute most to development. "This apparent hypocrisy led many observers and commentators refer to

developing countries as the real losers of Seattle” (Kell and Ruggie 1999). Addressing an audience of NGOs representatives, Ruggie said:

We do not reject the very phenomenon of globalization.... The world needs open markets. They are required to sustain prosperity in the industrialized world. And they provide the *only* hope of pulling billions of poor people in the developing countries out of abject poverty.... Let me be ... frank and end with a grave concern of my own. I fear that the rejectionists of globalization in the North are on a collision course with the needs of the poor in the South.... Northern rejectionists are driven by a cultural alienation from the institutions and practices that generate this wealth (Ruggie 2000).

In developed countries the UN-business partnership initiative has no urgency nor any lasting chance of institutionalization; it is closer to meddling than to revolutionary accomplishment. In developing countries leftist application of the remedy aggravates the condition it pretends to alleviate. These countries are interested in development, not in strengthening the UN system. Progress in implementing rights, education and public health depends from achieving a higher standard of living. The developing countries need growth, skill, technology, investment and good government. The UN system now recognizes the danger of “a potentially powerful policy coalition” of TNCs and the governments of developing countries—a threat to its own leftist ideology and global governance (Kell and Ruggie 1999).

Despite its call for partnership and the end of the confrontational approach of the past decade, the UN initiative continues to set one against the other, as opposing key actors in development, NGOs and transnational corporations. The argument against transnational corporations is that “many of their actions go unaccounted and unrecorded” (UNDP 1999a, 100). Their legal responsibility is mainly limited to their shareholders, “with their influence on national and international policy-making kept behind the scene.” Multinational corporations must be brought “into the structures of global governance.” UNDP proposes not only a “multilateral code of conduct” to rule their activities, but the creation of a global forum of TNCs, unions, NGOs, and governments (UNDP 1999a, 12). The power of multinational corporations is reputed to exceed that of many governments: a doctrine that presumably applies not to Northern governments but to developing countries. In developing countries, however, the norms and principles of the UN initiative and NGO interference cause problems; they are not relevant if they act as a drag on development.

The UN-business initiative assumes first that transnational corporations bear the responsibility of the imbalance between market operations and global values, and secondly that the UN ought to count on NGOs to redress the evils due to result from the alleged irresponsibility of business. A “dynamic interplay” between these two key actors (Kell and Ruggie 1999) is the remedy suggested to bridge the gap between economic globalization and the governance structures left behind by decades of exponential growth and progress—structures that have developed in favor of the market, in the absence of global norms.

Both assumptions bear the mark of exaggeration and idealism. Neither may the TNCs be charged, in a global and dogmatic way, with social irresponsibility, nor can the propriety of UN’s reliance on NGOs

remain unquestioned. In fact there is a distinct violation of constitutional rights that should be challenged. The UN system acts de facto as a sovereign institution and establishes NGOs as global governance actors.

At stake is again the question of the UN mandate and democratic control over the activities of its agencies and the Secretariat. In fact, the UN-business initiative concerns national governments as much as the market relationship with the UN system. UN governance must replace national policy because it allegedly belongs to a higher order. The core of the argument is that UN values transcend national values and therefore UN governance transcends the boundaries of national policy-making and its various shortcomings: short-term policies, wrong policies, policies that pay little attention to sound and long term systemic development. Rights are social goods and they are not contingent on public policy. In the UN paradigm, equity and sustainability are above political changes and passing political currents; in addition, they cannot be dominated by market forces.

The implementation of the UN-business partnership has begun. At the 1999 Davos Economic Forum, Annan proposed that the UN and business initiate “a global compact of shared values and principles, which will give a human face to the global market” (Annan 1999a). The aim of the compact is a creative partnership between the UN and the private sector, with “business doing what it does best—creating jobs and wealth—while rooting the global market in universal values” (Annan 1999g). The compact calls on the business sector “to become *directly* involved in helping the United Nations implement universally agreed standards found in key UN documents” (emphasis added) (OHCHR and BSR 2000)—in other words, for business to become de facto a direct partner of the UN in view of building global governance and implementing UN standards.

The compact invites the UN system and the market to join forces behind a set of core values in three main areas: human rights, labor and the environment. The global compact spells out its ideology in the form of nine basic principles as guidelines: support of and respect for the protection of human rights within the business’ sphere of influence; no complicity in human rights abuses; freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining for labor unions; elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labor; abolition of child labor abuses; nondiscrimination in employment and occupation; precautionary approach to environmental challenges; initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and encouragement, development, and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies. At the micro level, individual corporations should translate the principles into company policies and practices. At the macro level the private sector is called to play a vital role in advocacy for a strong and effective United Nations and “strengthening the ability of the United Nations to contribute to a wider implementation of standards in the area of human rights, labor and environmental protection.” The market could thus fill “an important governance gap which contributed to much of the unrest seen in Seattle” (OHCHR and BSR 2000).

The compact is based on *voluntariness*. It is its main characteristic. The global compact is essentially an inviting and benign call to cooperativeness addressed to corporations. The UN Secretariat describes the compact as an experiment, an open action model that has no vested institutional interests, no membership, no signing on. The UN system makes various disclaims concerning the nature of the compact. It first denies that it has any intention of institutionalizing its structures. Although it calls for direct involvement of corporations

in UN governance, the global compact is “not a call on corporations to replace Governments in their legitimate areas of responsibilities” but a frame of reference guiding them in their practical operations. In addition, the global compact is not “dictated by special interest groups, but carries the consensus of the world community” (Robinson 1999a). What matters is a global commitment to action contributing to the achievements of UN goals according to the world organization’s agenda. The challenge is therefore to establish “a global compact on the global scale to underpin the global economy” (Annan 1999a).

In its partnership with business, the UN does not innovate but follows the pattern previously used to build and implement the global consensus in all areas of UN activities. The UN says it takes a low profile but challenges “the international business community to incorporate universal values into their mission statements and to change management practices to achieve these goals” (Robinson 1999b). The sweep of the challenge is not modest as claimed. It is not only beyond the mandate of the UN but beyond its capacities. As it has happened in the other areas of UN activities and in spite of its claim to the contrary, the Global Compact was institutionalized from the start. Initially it is managed jointly by the OHCHR, the ILO, UNEP and the UN Secretariat. But other structures are already being created to monitor the implementation of the compact. Furthermore, the UN institutionalizes its business initiative in a more fundamental way when it describes both the process and the contents of the compact as the outcome of a consensus of the world community allegedly endorsed by virtually all member states. When the compact is linked to the new global consensus, its terms are no longer voluntary. The UN considers that core values, standards, particularly human rights, are already binding on corporations, not left to their own initiative. The UN claims that they are universally recognized. They are not put into question; the real object of the compact is their implementation.

The UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are “the two mother sources of authority and legitimacy” (Peeters 1999b; quoting Kell). The human rights conventions “define the ground rules of a global civilization” (Annan 2000a). The values of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights now need to be “translated into the principles and practices of global governance” (UNDP 1999a, 98). Labor standards are defined in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and governments endorsed the Rio Declaration of the Conference on Environment and Development. The global compact links the new UN-business relationship to these agreements. The proclaimed objective is to engage the UN and the private sector in a process in which the interests of the UN system, the business community and NGO partners converge around common goals: the goals of global governance. But the principle of *direct* involvement of the private sector in UN governance challenges an essential component of the constitution of the UN as mandatary of the sovereign member states. The global compact initiative is a vast undertaking and its implications are so consequential that a true and valid intergovernmental agreement would indeed have been needed to launch it.

Although the Secretariat, as part of its low profile strategy, formally denies that the compact is legally binding, it is an agreement that has parties and contents. At this stage, the identity of the parties to the global compact is not evident. It will be clarified if and when the compact gets effectively implemented. A number of corporations will then join and pledge allegiance to the United Nations. By doing so, they will declare their

identity and formally become party to the global compact.

Instead of dealing directly with individual corporations, however, the UN Secretariat has so far preferred to deal with business organizations deemed representative of the business world. In particular, considering the International Chamber of Commerce to be “the most influential and the most representative” (Peeters 1999b; quoting Kell) in terms of economic policies, the Secretariat has initially chosen to interact primarily with the ICC. In 1998 the two parties signed a *Joint Statement of Common Interests*, a document that prepared the ground for the global compact. Now the UN Secretariat also deals with other umbrella business organizations likely to endorse, actively advocate or monitor the implementation of the nine principles of the compact, such as the International Employers Organization (the counterpart to the trade unions in the ILO), the Conference Board (a global network that monitors and reports on progress towards the goals of the compact), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the European Business Network for Social Cohesion, the Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum, and Business for Social Responsibility (helping some 1,400 large companies improve their human rights performance). Clearly these organizations may not claim to represent individual businesses or corporations, the real market, for the business world is not monolithic. Some corporations have CEOs who will endorse the new consensus. Most CEOs, if properly informed about the vast hidden implications of the compact (the whole paradigm), will not. In its partnership with business, the revolutionary goal of the UN could very well be to gain a critical number of businesses to the compact in order to attain a level of irreversibility, so as to eventually obtain a compelling consensus on the part of business.

The commitment of business associations and of individual corporations to the compact will in turn pull the other contractual party out of anonymity. A party must have a name. Corporations will establish links with officials in the agencies that will manage the execution of the compact, namely the ILO, OHCHR, and UNEP. The Secretariat has also established a global compact office reporting directly to the executive office of the secretary-general. The mission of this office is to “leverage authority, catalyze action and ensure optimum synergies” with all parts of the system for the implementation of the global compact (Kell 2000). How effective, transparent and accountable this office has become is still unclear. Even more uncertain is the implication of labor unions, NGOs, and in fact of all stakeholders in the implementation of the compact. As the UN sees it, NGOs should

work on the ground with all stakeholders, collecting information, providing advice, giving training, and forging alliances among different social groups. Given this, NGOs play a key role in both raising public awareness and working with business and governments to find solutions to human rights, labour and environmental issues which involve the private sector (UN Secretariat 1999b).

On January 20, 2000, Bill Jordan, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and Kofi Annan signed a statement on the global compact and agreed “that insufficient attention paid

to labour issues, the environment, poverty and social concerns has become a major challenge to the sustainability of globalisation” (Jordan and Annan 2000).

The identification of the *contents* of the contract is even less explicit than the parties’ identity. The nine principles of the compact are not easily translatable in terms of contractual obligations. The contractants launched the compact without having established legal boundaries to mutual obligations as if a general sense of corporate duty and UN idealism would converge and produce in due time the desired synergy.

The forward movement, however, will not stop in this no man’s land of idealism. To succeed, the UN partnership with business will have to turn the screws and get tough on business. Successive steps of increasing import are in the offing. A number of corporations first issued voluntary codes of conduct. A code of conduct is a statement of policy meant to commit a business organization to act according to the principles it formally recognizes. It amounts to a social contract between the business organization and its stakeholders. A number of large companies have some kind of “corporate social responsibility manifesto” and consider it as “a prerequisite for any successful communication and public relations strategy.” A large number of operational or model voluntary codes already exist; they vary in quality and comprehensiveness. But they have no great impact if they are not “internally or externally monitored” (Annan 2000b). Many failed to meet human rights standards or lack uniform definitions and implementation methods. The absence of transparency and accountability may result in their being short-lived.

Codes of conduct are individual. The UN Secretariat is now getting more actively engaged in the discussion and establishment of *universal guidelines* for corporate social responsibility through governments. It seeks to finalize the guidelines on a global level. The UN’s added value would come from its character as “a truly multidisciplinary and universal intergovernmental organization that encompasses the interests of all countries” (Annan 2000b). What would be the contents of the guidelines proposed by the secretary-general? His intention is that the principles stipulated in the global compact should form the “first substantive part of a set of government policy guidelines for enhancing new opportunities for corporate participation in the development process.” A second part could include “proposals for governments to support that participation by the business sector,” calling on governments “to enhance and embrace partnership with business, trade unions, and other, nongovernmental organizations that were concerned with the improvement of the living standards of all people in global society” (Annan 2000b).

The formulation of these guidelines would require a process of intergovernmental consultation and action, which could take place at the ECOSOC Commission on Social Development. The secretary-general proposed that the development of guidelines be the priority theme of the 2002 agenda of the commission. According to the secretary-general, these guidelines can neither be formulated nor implemented without the participation of the private sector. To sum up, the guidelines should cover the “three primary areas ... that benefit from private sector participation: poverty alleviation, employment generation and the promotion of social integration as well as the three core concerns of the Global Compact, namely, the promotion of human rights, labour standards and environmental protection” (Annan 2000b).

Here again, the UN seeks to enlarge its mandate for the purpose of global social engineering. To be enacted, the formulation and implementation of the guidelines demand fundamental changes in the democratic process of the member states. The first change is that corporations must now enter in an interactive norm-setting partnership with governments—a partnership that aims at controlling their own activities. Another fundamental implication of the guidelines is that political parties must include the compact project in their platforms. Legislative bodies must get involved by making laws or by giving confidence to administrations able and willing to implement the UN project. On these vital points, governments must submit to UN governance. The guidelines entail not only major action by governments to regulate business, but require governments to submit to UN governance. The guidelines implicate member-states, appearing to respect their sovereignty and consequently the limits of the UN mandate. But as the movement goes forward, the global governance partners take a new initiative that closes the circle of the radical agenda: the *Global Reporting Initiative* (GRI).

The GRI was convened in 1997 by the *Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies* (CERES) in partnership with UNEP, with funds from the United Nations Foundation. CERES defines itself as “a non-profit coalition of investors, public pension funds, foundations, labor unions, and environmental, religious and public interest groups, working in partnership with companies toward the common goal of corporate environmental responsibility worldwide” (CERES 2000). By 2002 the Global Reporting Initiative will be established as a “permanent, independent, international body with a multi-stakeholder governance structure.” The GRI is to become a permanent international host “uniquely positioned to bring standard reporting guidelines to a global audience” (GRI 2000). The GRI also implicates NGOs, accountancy organizations, business associations, corporations, international organizations, and other stakeholders.

The objective of the GRI is to develop “a common framework for enterprise-level reporting on key environmental, economic and social indicators.” To this effect, the GRI released *sustainability reporting guidelines* in June 2000, with the input of twenty-one pilot test companies, including Ford Motor Company, British Airways, General Motors, Shell, Procter and Gamble and Sunoco. The GRI encourages enterprises to accept guidelines for reporting on sustainable development in a manner similar to “generally accepted accounting procedures” (OHCHR and BSR 2000). The new process for reporting will “incorporate concepts and methodologies from both traditional financial auditing and from other disciplines and models” (GRI 2000). The learning process will be incremental and facilitated by consultation and commitment of all stakeholders. The objective is to make available to a global audience of users “routine disclosure of environmental, economic and social information” on corporate practice and performance (GRI 2000). The initiative invites reporting corporations to participate in consultations in order to build consensus on future standards on *verification*.

Corporate transparency is a valid objective, a rule of reason implemented in democratic systems with appropriate restraint and due respect for individual freedom. The GRI turns it into an ideological absolute. The GRI aims at making corporations *wholly* transparent for the purpose of enforcing UN norms. Up to now business organizations issuing voluntary reports have been at liberty to report what they choose, making it

difficult, in the view of the promoters of the GRI, to harmonize and to institutionalize reporting practices. “Today, at least 2,000 companies around the world voluntarily report information on their economic, environmental, and social policies, practices, and performance. Yet, this information is generally inconsistent, incomplete, and unverified” (GRI 2000). The overarching purpose of the GRI is to arrive at uniform and globally applicable guidelines. The problem is that business organizations are very diverse: differences in corporate structures and activities make comparability difficult to establish.

The GRI guidelines must therefore *balance* uniformity and flexibility, but also scientific objectivity or rigor and commitment. The GRI requests corporations to make a complete, accurate statement of their identity, objectives, and activities. To establish the credibility of the information they file, the corporations’ report must contain a clear statement of the board and CEO that it conforms to the GRI guidelines. If the reporting organization is not able to furnish all the information required by the guidelines, it must explain any restriction in reporting and commit itself to move step by step toward total reporting. The report must also include an executive summary giving an overview and key information to stakeholders and users.

Besides making public all significant data, the GRI asks the participating business organization to explain how its strategic vision integrates the norms of sustainable development. This is the *systemic* parameter of the reporting process. The reporting corporation must make a declaration of commitment to the economic, environmental, and social policies of the UN system.

Another major point is that the GRI guidelines are intended “to support and *supplement* existing initiatives and agreements, particularly those international treaties and conventions that embody universal norms and practices” (emphasis added) (GRI 2000). In other words, if corporations follow the guidelines, they will not only be considered indirect parties to the conventions, but asked to go *beyond* treaty obligations. Needless to say, this enlargement of the scope of legal obligation to the corporate world would fundamentally distort the legal order.

Potential corporate participants should be cognizant of the scope of the reporting. Corporations must first report on their identity. Each organization must describe its boundaries and activities, explain decisions such as subcontracting, mergers or joint venture arrangements, and provide all the elements needed for a complete profile with, *inter alia*, names of products, sales, assets breakdown, costs by country and region, and verification of the reported data.

One of the most decisive features of the GRI process is that the information reported by the corporation must be relevant to the decision-making needs of the *users*. As it is now defined, the social responsibility of corporations goes beyond their business interests and concerns all of those who have a stake in the fulfillment of their tasks. That includes not only the management, customers and suppliers, labor unions, workers and their dependents, but also people affected by industrial pollution and significantly individuals and organized groups that “take an interest in the behaviour of the company both within and outside its normal mode of operation” (Annan 2000b), governments, local authorities, and—of course—NGOs. Interactive consultation and dialogue with users is an essential part of the GRI process, particularly in choosing indicators. These must be easy to verify. The report must be complete in order to avoid the accusation of

partiality or selectivity and it must also use clear and simple language. The GRI argues that business organizations profit from objective and transparent reporting. Reporting becomes for corporations a reliable tool for evaluating their own performance but also the framework for effective communication with users.

The present GRI system does not provide guidelines for implementing or monitoring corporate performance and verification of the report information. These matters are still left to the discretion of reporting organizations. But the writing is on the wall. If and when more organizations adopt the guidelines, the users will have a greater capacity to advocate progress on good practices, to check on corporate performance and conformity with UN standards, and to attain the critical mass necessary to swing the GRI from voluntariness to compulsory implementation.

The GRI is flawed in various ways. It has a sectoral view of the corporation as a sociological or economic actor, not as a specific human community that has its own values and identity, an authentic culture or tradition, and is linked with every component of the individual's environment. The basic concept of the corporation in the GRI is sectoral and scientific. It treats the corporation as an object of social science. It is not people-centered but abstract and related to the UN ideology and norms. It is the passage from the scientific narrative to policy-making that is critical and itself subject to the democratic principles of accountability and free consent. If our society and the private sector voluntarily choose to enforce the resulting guidelines as historical compromise between the UN and the market, and turn them into enforceable norms, so will it be, for better or for worse. But the choice must be free and consensual. Through its linkages to existing national, international and global standards, the GRI could acquire a political mass that will overwhelm conservative opposition and become the main instrument of global governance by civil society.

The “verification of sustainability reports, like sustainability reporting itself, is at an early stage”—in fact “in its infancy” (GRI 2000). The promoters of the project recognize that economic, social, and so-called *integrated indicators* are less developed than environmental indicators. These are easily determined: examples are total fuel use, use of recycled materials, total water use, greenhouse gas emissions, use of hazardous chemicals. Social indicators include employee retention rate, job satisfaction levels, demonstrated application of human rights screens in investment, and economic indicators include net profit, dividends, debt/equity ratio, taxes paid to all taxing authorities. Systemic integration is the true objective and the weakest spot of the reporting initiative. The end of the GRI is indeed to relate corporate practices to sustainability, but we are still far from this objective.

Human rights are critical in the UN-business global compact. They are likely to create tensions among the two partners, because the dynamic human rights are in, driven by the NGO movement, constantly enlarges the obligations of stakeholders and leaves them before an uncharted course. The UN now makes it explicit that, in order to build a universal culture of rights and realize people-centered development, “a context of an equitable and sustainable economic order” must be built beforehand as an ineluctable prerequisite. (Robinson 1999b)

Business and the economy are now instrumentalized to create the UN-envisioned global culture of human rights. They must themselves become agents of change. This conditionality makes it all the more

urgent and ethically imperative, according to the UN, to infuse considerations of equity and solidarity into the economy. It also justifies the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' direct relationship with business—a novelty. Up to now, the emphasis has been on obligating state parties to implement human rights. Now the emphasis is on building human rights into the corporate culture. This means that human rights must be institutionalized within companies, into the “decision-making and operational structure of a business,” and be integrated not only into companies' principles, but also into their policies and activities (OHCHR and BSR 2000). Mary Robinson also affirms that human rights must now “permeate macro-economic policies, embracing fiscal policies, monetary policies, exchange rate policies, and trade policies” (Robinson 1999b). She does not explain, however, how this will be done, and according to which and whose norms and criteria.

In response to Annan's global compact, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in partnership with the business and human rights program of the US-based business organization *Business for Social Responsibility*, has produced a report on business and human rights. The report suggests nine steps that companies can take to build human rights into their practice. The steps are: identifying the human rights issues that a company might face; developing policy options; operationalizing policy (“translating broad principle into practice”); reaching out to academics, social partners, stakeholders; educating and training key staff; developing internal capacity; communicating with business partners; establishing performance benchmarks and holding designated staff responsible for implementation; experimenting with independent verification and public reporting (OHCHR and BSR 2000).

Again, the UN uses the argument of profitability as a bait. Robinson presents human rights as a “key performance indicator for corporations” and affirms that respecting them improves business performance and worker productivity and maintains “positive community relations.” Consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the way workers are treated and demand public accountability (OHCHR and BSR 2000).

In a typical strategy of enlargement, the OHCHR's report invites companies to respect not only the rights contained in the Universal Declaration and human rights conventions, but also codes and standards that “have proliferated in recent years”: initiatives of global stakeholders' such as Amnesty International's Human Rights Guidelines for Companies, the Global Sullivan Principles, Social Accountability 8000, and the Ethical Trading Initiative. The report establishes that, because human rights standards are primarily focused on the public sector, additional guidelines are needed to ensure that companies make these principles relevant to their operations. Although the global compact is still lacking shape, the OHCHR pursues a dynamic enlargement of its initial principles.

Not only human rights standards for business, but human rights themselves will be enlarged, and new issues will be put on companies' agendas. The enlargement process will get out of control. Migrant labor now demands increasing attention, as do the questions of a living wage (a company's responsibilities to ensure that workers' basic needs are met), gender equity, rights issues resulting from technological advances and accessibility to electronic commerce. The authors even ask, “How does the development of biotechnology, especially including genetic engineering, affect human rights, when the definition of humanity might change?” (OHCHR and BSR 2000).

Business' progress in implementing human rights will call for so-called "innovative, mutually beneficial partnerships at all levels between governments, corporations, non-governmental organizations, international organizations and wider civil society." (OHCHR and BSR 2000) Whether they like it or not, businesses will be forced to deal with increasingly powerful civil society networks. NGOs such as Amnesty International, Global Exchange, Human Rights Watch, Global Witness, and the International Labor Rights Fund have monitored the human rights performance of businesses. These NGOs press companies to use external monitoring of their operations and to "seek input from a broad range of stakeholders prior to establishing policies, practices and systems of accountability to manage successfully the implementation of a human rights policy" (OHCHR and BSR 2000).

The confusion will be made worse by the meddling of the UN Secretariat acting as the broker between NGOs and business. The OHCHR, which is part of the Secretariat, is thus formulating "principles of partnership" between business and NGOs: "Navigating the thousands of NGOs operating around the world, and finding the right partner, is critical" (OHCHR and BSR 2000).

As NGO standards are formalized and global governance institutionalized, the direct interference of NGOs in the affairs of business (in the form of audits, for instance) will become more and more intricate and demanding. NGOs pursue their own interests and follow their own logic with their own strategy. NGO meddling will likely put increasing demands on business and will enlarge the global compact by integrating in it new rights, new policy objectives, new values.

The OHCHR is also exploring the question of "international accountability for alleged corporate violations of human rights." The high commissioner has asked "the six human rights treaty bodies and the special rapporteurs and working groups appointed by the UN Commission on Human Rights to study how they could best promote within their mandates such accountability" (OHCHR and BSR 2000). The final question thus is: who will ultimately be in charge of punishing corporate violations of human rights—national governments or the UN?

The heat will be on transnational corporations. An ECOSOC subcommission has already established a working group "to examine the effects of the working methods and activities of transnational corporations on human rights." At its first meeting in August 1999 the group recommended developing a code of conduct for transnational corporations and "drafting and adopting mechanisms through which host and home governments would be obliged to elaborate internal legal monitoring standards with respect to the activities of transnational corporations." The subcommission also analyzed "the possible liability of States and transnational corporations which fail to fulfil their obligations" (OHCHR and BSR 2000). There is no way to escape from the inexorable logic of the rights approach and to avoid its social, political and juridical consequences. How welcome will be a movement that will bring us back to reality.

The ultimate objective and consequence of the proposed UN-business partnership is the strengthening of global governance. UN and NGO meddling in the affairs of business will become customary and custom will lead to a progressive institutionalization of the mechanisms of global governance. This process is compounded by the partners' propaganda in favor of the globalization of civil society. We are now witnessing,

says deputy secretary general Louise Fréchette, “the birth of a global community in which individuals can participate directly or through many different kinds of collective structures” (Fréchette 2000).

What will be the role of the UN system in the new architecture? The Secretariat holds that global governance does “not imply a world government, or even a set of supranational global institutions comparable to those of the European Union.” The UN vision is “more modest. For the foreseeable future at least, the world community must be built on intergovernmental processes. . . The essential building-block of this new structure must be the sovereign nation-state.” However, the international community can no longer be viewed as “a rough balance of power between alliances based purely on a temporary convergence of national interests.” In the new perspective the nation-state is only one structure among many others in global governance. It is vital, says Fréchette, that global institutions “reach out to involve the non-State actors which play an increasingly important role in world affairs” (Fréchette 2000). By claiming that national sovereign states will remain central in the new architecture, the UN appears to respect the traditional role of the state. As seen, however, the UN contributes to fundamentally distort the role of the state by balancing it against the role of NGOs and other actors and turning this balance system into normative global governance. As seen in chapter two, the paradigm’s balancing act follows an integrative logic that is transforming and leads to a loss of identity of its traditional components in favor of the UN’s new values.

The UN’s self-reform and streamlining of its institutions have resulted in a better identification of its role in global governance. It is clear that the UN system will not openly seek to usurp the role of other actors on the world stage, to try to function openly as a world government or act as a central authority. But the UN will continue to rely on informality and parallel processes to exercise, by stealth, global leadership in normative governance. Governance shifts the emphasis from the authority of law and hierarchical democratic structures to the persuasiveness of new and global values and thereby distorts the democratic process. The UN alleges that social ethic is the true source of its legitimacy. In this play of roles, the UN, besides being the mouthpiece and political proxy of radical NGOs, acts as the global visionary, the quiet and benevolent awareness-raiser, the low-profile facilitator. The UN system means to continue to operate quietly as a facilitator of global change, as “a catalyst for collective action,” Kofi Annan says, “both among its Member States and between them and the vibrant constellation of new non-state actors,” as “the place where new standards of international conduct are hammered out, and broad consensus on them is established.” The UN is to become “a global public trust for all the world’s people” (Annan 2000c)—an expression borrowed from the Citizens’ Public Trust Treaty (see chapter 3). The “digital revolution” has given the UN system the technology needed to accomplish its new role and to live within its constrained financial resources. All in all the gains of the Global New Left concern the institutionalization and mechanisms of governance more than substantive changes, process more than contents, governance more than consensus.

Despite the low-profile image that the UN wants to keep, and its denial that it is moving toward a world government, the strengthening of the UN and the creation of new institutions of global governance are explicit goals of the reformers. These goals include

a stronger and more coherent United Nations to provide a forum for global leadership with equity and human concerns; a global central bank and lender of last resort; a WTO that ensures both free and fair international trade, with a mandate extending to global competition policy with antitrust provisions and a code of conduct for multinational corporations; a world environment agency; a world investment trust with redistributive functions; an international criminal court with a broader mandate for human rights; a broader UN system, including a two-Chamber General Assembly to allow for civil society representation (UNDP 1999a, 12).

If these and other proposals are enacted, the new UN will act as a world government. It will have a legislative branch (the bicameral assembly), a judicial branch (the strengthened international criminal court or the human rights court), an executive (the strengthened Secretariat), and ministries (UN agencies, funds, and programs).

The UNDP argues that the key economic structures, namely the IMF, World Bank, G-7, G-22, OECD, and WTO are “inadequate for the challenges of the twenty-first century” (UNDP 1999a, 12). They must be rethought on the ground that they are neither representative nor participatory. The principal weakness of economic global governance is the lack of “mechanisms for making ethical standards and human rights binding for corporations and individuals, not just governments” (emphasis added) (UNDP 1999a, 8). Some partners advocate as a solution the creation of an *economic security council*.

The WTO, the multilateral trading system, has been in the line of fire, and may test the UN’s ambivalence. The UN recognizes the importance of the international trading system. The position of the UN Secretariat is that we must “avoid saddling the trade regime with a load it cannot bear—conditionalities” (Annan 2000a). What should be done, in the secretary-general’s view, is to “build bridges between trade and environment, between trade and labor, between trade and human rights” and to “strengthen the pillars of global governance in these areas”—in other words, to strengthen the UN Secretariat, the OHCHR, UNEP, ILO, and all other UN agencies. “After all,” Annan observed, “a bridge cannot rest on only one pillar” (Annan 1999g). Kell says that with his global compact, Annan is stating:

I know that none of you really wants to destroy the trading system. I have an easy way out: we don’t need new institutions; we don’t need new mandates; we have it all. We have the ILO in charge of labour issues. We have the UNEP in charge of environmental issues. We have a human rights programme in charge of human rights issues. What we need is sufficient authority and resources for these programmes to do what they are supposed to do (Peeters 1999b).

Needless to say, these claims must be examined. As already mentioned, with the compact, the UN is trespassing the limits of its mandate by dealing directly with corporations, bypassing national governments.

In addition, the UN wants the WTO to internalize UN values and, according to the same logic, to align the policies of the trade organization with existing human rights covenants. A trend in that direction

already exists. In Seattle, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (a UN treaty-monitoring body) urged WTO to review “the full range of international trade and investment policies and rules in order to ensure that these are consistent with existing treaties, legislation and policies designed to protect and promote all human rights.” The committee affirmed that trade, finance, and investment were “in no way exempt from human rights principles.” (UN CESCR 1999)

As it now operates, UNEP (the UN program in charge of the environment) is unable to fill its role as a pillar of global governance. UNEP and the WTO are conducting a tug of war over trade and the environment. The partners are complaining about the imbalance between the two organizations: “No institutional counterweight to the WTO on the environmental side exists.” Klaus Töpfer, UNEP’s executive director, calls the WTO “the most powerful international organization ever devised.” By contrast, “UNEP’s position and budget have eroded steadily in recent years” (Töpfer 1998). UNDP describes “present structures and levels of global support” in the area of the environment as “minuscule” “relative to today’s global economy.” A world environment agency “with much larger resources and broader functions” is needed to “oversee the global environment” (UNDP 1999a, 113).

UNEP and WTO, says Töpfer, should “focus on developing a win-win agenda. Trade can be a tool in shaping a world that is environmentally sustainable and socially just. Poverty is the most poisonous substance for sustainable development, for social stability and for environmental responsibility.” Protectionism is an obsolete option. The real questions ought to be: “Can we make the outcome of liberalization better in terms of general welfare gains? When environmental costs are known, can we identify appropriate policies at the outset?” (Töpfer 1998).

Back to Reality

Constructing a “new global architecture for the twenty-first century” (UNDP 1999a, 98) is the current ambition of the world organization. This global architecture will finalize the revolutionary shifts that have taken place since the end of the Cold War. The UN has taken leadership in interpreting these shifts and translated them into the norms of global governance.

In the past decade, a cultural revolution has spread like prairie fire, fast scorching the surface of our political landscape, withering traditions and leaving behind profound changes. The cultural revolution included first a “shift from the state-centered approaches to pluralist, multi-actor approaches” with the consequence that not only governments but also NGOs, corporations, schools, families, communities, and individuals—in brief, all actors are deemed responsible and accountable (UNDP 2000e, 13). Next came the shift from the national to the international norms and obligations of states. The present perspective implies “the rendering of international human rights standards and legal norms supreme over domestic laws” (p. 37). There must finally be a shift “from the international obligations of states to the responsibilities of global actors” (p. 13)—in other words and in the view of the UN system, a shift to global governance, the end stop of the cultural revolution. For better or for worse, the outcome is bound to be a new global architecture.

The quiet revolution has another side, less definite than the three shifts, and negative. The dominance

of UN ideology over intergovernmental consensual choice has created a situation of *global malaise* and unclarity. In the conference process of the last decade, the mechanisms of traditional democratic politics have not been used, but a consensus of global scope and uncertain legality is now being implemented. The UN system has defined not only the new global values, such as people-centeredness, but the issues of global governance concerning for example the institutions needed for the new century. The operationalization of this consensus follows covert and indirect pathways which have a name: enlargement, imbibition, systemic integration, mainstreaming, networking, partnerships, guidelines, best practices, treaty monitoring. The obeisance of corporations and governments to UN governance stifles their will. They obey with docility to UN social science and let sophisticated papers turn into customary law. NGOs and unions are watching. So are the UN through systemic information collection, global assessment initiatives, global indicators, best practices, Common Country Assessments, Treaty Monitoring Bodies, the Global Reporting Initiative and various watchdog groups such as the International Consultative Forum on Education for All.

Why have governments and corporations allowed themselves to become so impressed by the UN-NGO leadership? We need to restore a sense of being free to say no, to restore opposition and not feel ashamed. These days it is really governments and corporations that should watch NGOs and the UN, not the other way around. Some countries—those with a weaker sense of national identity—are more easily intimidated than others. Instead of relying on global solutions and of reducing foreign policy to being the tail of the UN kite, itself controlled bottom up by NGOs, the leading nations of the world should take creative initiatives as sovereign independent actors.

UN paradigms and indicators come and go, knocking themselves over in quick succession. The Babel syndrome characterizes a ceaseless proliferation of novel concepts that entice and soon deceive before being replaced by others. The paradigm has no roots. It is ill-governed. Having many heads, it is at the same time for democracy and against it, for development and against growth, for the family and against the traditional family, for universal tolerance and intolerant of traditional rights and religions.

Nevertheless, the existence of a reality called *global consensus* cannot be denied. The UN is an intergovernmental organization, and governments did commit themselves to implement the goals of the global conferences. They endorsed UN reform without wincing. They regularly accept to report to treaty monitoring bodies according to UN terms and norms and collaborate with UN agencies. A number of corporations have already cooperated with Annan's compact through the Global Reporting Initiative, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development or other associations.

A new *Pax Romana* that is not really peace thus prevails over the world. It enforces its rule by norms and principles that are not law but common language. Politicians, heads of state, academia, lawyers, businessmen, undergraduates, teachers in grade schools speak in unison of corporate governance, educational governance, health governance, global governance, participation, people-centeredness, gender equity, inclusive democracy, sustainable development, environmental protection, a culture of rights, a culture of peace. These concepts are politically operational and are mixed with words that refer to universal values and traditions. The radical agenda has hijacked these concepts and as a result, the global consensus is a mix, not a exclusive body

of either radical or traditional norms. Who can be against human rights, solidarity, corporate accountability, or participation? Do we agree on how these concepts should be understood? Is there really a global consensus? Are governments committed to the UN agenda—yes or no? Do they interpret it in the same way as the UN? The answers to all of these questions are unclear.

What is already evident, however, is that the global agenda gets mainly implemented not through democratic channels, but parallel ones: essentially NGO networks acting on the ground in partnership with the UN. What happens on the side of global governance has so far escaped democratic control, but this doesn't mean that global governance does not happen and does not continue to move forward. The paradigm has created a *global parallel society*—that of the partners, those who now own the cultural revolution. This global parallel society is becoming self-assertive. The real question is: whose agenda does in effect get implemented? Who, at this point in time, does hold the reins of power? Is it governments, corporations—or the partners, the NGOs working in partnership with the UN? Do we already live in an anarchic and schizophrenic society? If we fail to address this state of confusion, the traditional democratic political, economic and legal processes may be fundamentally damaged or distorted from within. The habit of relying on UN-NGO governance is now entrenched and redressing the situation will be no easy task.

The emergence of post-Cold War global geopolitical realities has given credibility to the UN system: as global institution the UN system sets global norms and practical goals that transcend national policies and norms. The UN has claimed all along that the new situation created by globalization demands new values and paradigms that only the UN can elaborate because it stands above national interests, differences and problems. The new dogma is that the UN is by nature entitled to global normative power. The logical inference is first that the UN has to be strengthened and next that there is no alternative to the systemic implementation of its paradigm. The Global New Left has deemed any opposition to its agenda reactionary. These arguments draw support from the partners' pessimistic outlook on the environment, poverty, the market's amorality, inequity and public apathy: global behavioral change and UN moral leadership are the alternatives to global doom. The idea that the UN and NGOs *are* civil society must be challenged, and so must be the idea that the outcome of the world conferences constitute, in Annan's words, a globally "normative consensus" (Annan 2000b).

However, despite the gains of the partners in the last decade, the present state of the world is no longer what it was at the beginning of the 1990s. The Global New Left will find it increasingly difficult to maintain the momentum of the paradigm on the basis of a pessimistic agenda. It is becoming plain that the forays of UN initiatives are parts of a global strategy. Although the complexity of the UN system remains baffling despite UN reform, more observers and policy-makers understand at least that the UN system pursues a dual strategic objective—namely, to strengthen itself as a global institution and to promote social change according to its own values. The agenda is no longer hidden and public opinion grows tired of ambivalence, radicalism and divisiveness. Common sense, experience, reality, and trust in the democratic process are likely to prevail. Indeed, we may have already reached a higher plateau that opens a vista of global peace and prosperity. Much will depend on the course that business will choose in response to the partnership initiative taken by the UN.

Corporate networks should interactively pursue the objective of demystifying UN normative powers. It is not true that the UN system and its partners own the positive changes of the past decade. Leftist activism is opportunist. It has claimed to be, but never has been, the source of the forces driving history forward. Values such as participation, solidarity, equity, social inclusion, freedom, pluralism, personal and cultural identity are not new. They have been hijacked. The private sector now needs to regain self-confidence as true owner of basic human values. It needs self-awareness, a new vision of itself, conscious self-organizing, and a new set of strategic choices. Free enterprise indeed guarantees an environment of liberty and the values of the family, religion, and cultural diversity to which the UN system has so far paid only lip service—or has altogether distorted or replaced with collectivist values.

The nature of the mandate that the UN Charter grants to the organization has been blurred. An audit would create the awareness that the UN mandate must be redefined. From this reduction would follow a redistribution of tasks. Every social actor—governments, world organizations, corporations, and NGOs—would do what it could do best. Confrontational activism and divisive values would then lose much of their current grip. Genuine consensus building could begin. The positive components of the cultural revolution of the past decade could be disentangled from ideological radicalism and would be integrated in a sustainable cultural synthesis. Democratic consensus, economic sustainability, and basic freedoms are circular and mutually reinforcing. Utopia's rhetorical activity and leftist opportunism could no longer count on and thrive from the splendid isolation of the private sector, which holds the levers of global development but has often behaved like a sleeping, unconcerned giant.

Focusing on UN accomplishments would bring out that the system should invest itself in real development and not in ideology. The prosperity of local markets and institutions is dependent not on glorified abstractions, globalized policies, or collective values, but on hard work to be accomplished locally by the people themselves, self-financing, microprojects, adoption of tried formulas such as consumer orientation, education, inventiveness and private initiative, and local entrepreneurial activism. Socialist agendas are discarded and the values of free enterprise come, in due time, to prevail democratically.

The UN has to respond to real needs and not to the demands of leftist activists. The monolithic core of NGO partners and groups that enthusiastically support UN programs is not the organization's strength but the Achilles' heel of the system as it now operates. The UN's real constituency are the developing countries in need of a new social, political, and economic environment. To this group also belong former communist countries in transition to democracy and a free economy. The number one issue on the real agenda of world governance is to help developing countries and countries in transition institutionalize the political, social and economic arrangements they need to complete and stabilize their democratic transition. These countries cannot be satisfied with a panacea of new paradigms and UN rhetoric.

It is a paradox that the UN agencies and Northern NGOs which consistently criticized democratic norms and traditions in the great democracies of the West now have to support democracy in the developing world and to uphold the rule of law, the role of democratic opposition, the separation of powers and representative government.

To reexamine the nature of the relationship between the UN and NGOs should be a major priority for governments, business, public opinion and political parties. In circular inbreeding, UN institutions exhort one another to open up further to advocacy NGOs as a “vital source of energy and expertise.” The secretary-general recommends to the General Assembly to find ways of involving civil society “more fully” in UN work “in all its aspects” (Annan 2000c). Global NGO policy networks or “coalitions for change” (Annan 2000c) as conducive to “inclusive globalization,” are considered vital in raising and altering public consciousness and behavior, in negotiating agreements on new global standards as well as in creating new mechanisms for implementing and monitoring them.

NGOs, networks, academia, and individual experts are protected by the rights of free speech and association. They can freely and legitimately express their views and exercise their rights. But the political use of scientific information is totally different from free speech. An unhealthy component of the UN-NGO relationship is the reliance of the UN system, not on democratic grass-root awareness and consent as it claims, but on the expertise of a few well-organized and often highly articulate NGOs. Basing political legitimacy on scientific expertise at the expense of the democratic process leads to enlightened despotism.

Leftist experts argue that political legitimacy depends not on consent or democratic representation but on the proper use of science. Those enlightened despots claim that if programs and policies are right scientifically, they also are right socially, and the question of legitimacy and accountability is not a primary consideration. This carries tonalities of Marxism as the master science, and the similarity is not, as they say, a coincidence. Enlightened despotism must be rejected in principle.

Enlightened despotism contradicts the logic of the new paradigm intended to replace top-down by bottom-up processes, imposition by dialogue, government by governance, for enlightened despotism is eminently top down. As practiced at the UN, it is also unprecedentedly global. The trend of replacing democratic checks and balances by despotic norms is by nature contrary to the approach of consensus building and genuine participatory democracy.

The paradigm uses the idea of the social contract in many different ways. Political theory has traditionally distinguished between the contract that binds a society to values, norms and a national purpose and the contract insofar as it establishes a way of government. Democratic institutions are established by a constitution, which also sets limits on the mandate that each branch of government receives from the people. The part of the social contract that concerns our constitutions should also be reasserted. After a time of revolutionary change, people need to rebuild confidence in their national institutions. The moment has come to put an end to divisiveness. A period of quiet disentanglement should follow a decade of quiet revolution. A confrontational approach to the issues that divide our society would not be accepted and might compromise a change of political attitudes.

The Global New Left, however, still believes that now in this twenty-first century as in earlier times advances will be won by people’s movements struggling “against the opposition of entrenched cultural, economic and political interests” (UNDP 2000e, 6). The task of “instilling a democratic culture at all levels of society is a radical process—threatening existing values, inequities and injustices” (p. 66). The Agitprop digs

up the hatchet and criticizes majoritarian democracy for excluding and discriminating against minorities and focusing on public loyalty at the expense of private loyalties (religious, ethnic, and regional).

Inclusive democracy is the newest UN paradigm. It is

built on the principle that political power is dispersed and shared in a variety of ways—to protect minorities and to ensure participation and free speech for all citizens. Inclusive democracy emphasizes the quality of representation by striving for consensus and inclusion, not the brute electoral force of the majority. An inclusive democracy also appreciates the need to promote civil society organizations, open media, rights-oriented economic policy and separation of powers (UNDP 2000e, 57).

Inclusive democracy clarifies the concepts of participatory democracy and governance. It is at last explicit that governance or inclusive or participatory democracy rejects traditional or majoritarian democracy. It is only logical that what the UN and its partners, including member-states have at first informally practiced (governance, participatory democracy) should now be formally conceptualized in view of being institutionalized.

In spite of UNDP's emphasis on participation and inclusion as a reinvention of government, the UN Secretariat speaks of the "rehabilitation" of the public sector, meaning "strengthening the legal and regulatory framework and the transparency and predictability of public institutions as well as their capacity for enforcement." The argument now, in Kofi Annan's words, is that "the process of economic reform has in many cases weakened the capacity of the State to promote social development" and that liberalization and privatization "should not take place at the expense of an appropriate regulatory framework" (Annan 1999j). The focus of the UN system on the public sector is justified by the need to oversee the process of economic reform and to create an enabling environment for social development. The remedy for all ills is regulation, legislation, rights enlargement, enforcement, and lawsuits. Incidentally and unsurprisingly however, UN reformers do not speak of rehabilitating the public sector to regulate NGOs.

The paradigm of inclusive democracy has not been endorsed intergovernmentally. But in the partners' mind, participatory or inclusive, democracy has already replaced representative democracy, and global governance already transcends national sovereignty. The informal process of consensus-building, that has led governments to accept the shift from development to sustainable development, from life expectancy to health expectancy, from the pursuit of happiness to quality of life, may well lead them also to drift toward acceptance of the latest paradigm of inclusive democracy.

In spite of all its gains, the forward movement may have overreached itself and its future may be less certain than it seems to the partners. Abstract reasoning and quantification, UN abuse of informal normative power and idealism are unsustainable and produce fatigue. As the process moves from agenda to action, the implementation of the paradigm tests the practicality of its norms, and the pendulum starts to swing back to realism. Real outcomes and achievements will emerge as more important than paradigms and norms. After all, the emotional or romantic basis on which the consensus was adopted must at last be recognized. Was there

not collective hysteria at the global conferences about the state of the world? Is it not irrational to submit to the “morality” of a few NGOs and the UN? Was it not naïve to believe that the UN could solve all problems and aberrant to let a few Leftists rule the world with their ideas?

As things now stand, the trend toward realism may not be strong enough and sufficiently organized to halt the forward movement. Procedures to hold all actors accountable to global governance (from state reports on their implementation of rights to human development indicators, common country assessment and monitoring multinational corporations) are likely to become more detailed, proliferate and be more strictly operationalized. The challenge of accountability should be turned around, away from global governance to real democracy. Indeed, in democracy the first right is accountability to oneself, self-responsibility. What do we choose to be as an individual person, as a family, as a school, as an American nation? Is the world to become a global Woodstock, or are we Americans and the world to be what we should be? Every human being, every corporation, every nation ought to choose what it wants to be, and be accountable to itself.

Businesses, in particular, need to choose. The first choice they must make is to free themselves from the fascination exerted by UN normative leadership. The second choice is strategic: how will they address the challenge of global governance? A nondiscriminative, affirmative response to the UN would subject business, particularly multinational corporations, to the normative and jurisdictional control of the UN system. Another choice is to ignore the revolution and to continue to do business as usual. But isolationism is a dangerous game. As the French proverb puts it, absentees are always wrong (*les absents ont toujours tort*).

The courageous and only efficient option for the corporate world is to declare its independence from the UN. It must reject UN dominance, yet throw its weight in the battle. It must make its voice heard as an independent force in its role as the principal agent of growth, innovation, social progress, and social identity. It must itself take an active part, on its own terms, in the public debate on issues where the UN wrongly claims to hold a monopoly by default (values, rights, development, environmental protection, and so on). The enterprise is a human community, indeed one of the first and principal forms of organizing the human environment where we all learn to associate with others, to enter into free and creative partnerships, to balance individual pursuits with public service, and to accept a division of labor in terms of the common good. Some management processes such as secrecy and traditional lobbying could become increasingly counterproductive because they are no longer socially acceptable. Business could for example create specific NGOs, business organizations independent from the UN, its own activity on reporting (of course the UN will oppose the argument of the necessity of standardization), awareness-raising about its own views, networking, consensus-building, taking the initiative instead of leaving it to the UN. We are indeed at a time when dynamic activities, creative innovations, entrepreneurial initiatives, new forms of business management, involvement in human concerns are paramount.

At the local level, individual enterprises could consider the option of encouraging the implosion of the leftist monopoly on people-centeredness and solidarity by working from the inside of the governance process instead of relying on outside lobbying. Several corporations could create in their internal organization a new function integrating the concerns specific to the enterprise and to its stakeholders, but not in the perspective of

the UN agenda. They would do so, not as partners of the UN, but as independent and vital actors of social development. The primary objective of this function would be to create an environment of free and personal capacity-building and social capital. In concentric circles inclusive management would diversify its public relations with their immediate environment. Networks operating independently from existing global business groupings would be established; from place to place, the wind on the sails of the antibusiness movement would slacken and die down.

Business' self-assertive stance would be a quiet revolution, unfolding through incremental steps. It would have crucial effects. It would change the balance of power that now prevails between the major actors of global governance. Non-governmental organizations are paper tigers. They would lose the prerogative that they have held in the UN system since the world conferences. The partners' quiet revolution drew from NGOs' alleged vision. The democratic quiet revolution must draw from the citizens' vision, including corporate vision of what is needed to restore democratic processes on the way to peace and prosperity. The corporation would again be treated as a partner in civil society—indeed as a main agent of human development and social growth. As explained, the partners created an ethical vacuum on the side of business. The original conceptual exclusion of business from civil society is one of the root causes of the UN's running off the rails.

In a chain reaction, the pessimism of the Global New Left in relation to business spread to all fundamental traditions: the family, the great world religions, national democratic representation and institutions, the sovereignty of nation-states, and pluralistic cultural identity. Radicalism lumps them together on the alleged ground that they all belong to the same culture of violence characterized by competition, consumerism, absolutism, the ambition to conquer nature, lust, male domination, patriarchy, domination of one group over another, intolerance of differences, despotic governance, dogma, and centralized and hierarchical structures. There is an ominous unity in exclusive radicalism. The world organization that proclaims itself as paragon of global morality and inclusive democracy has supported strategies, policies, and programs that in practice militate against the family and religion. It distrusts the humanistic traditions of democratic government, besides being antimarket. Jealous of US leadership and power, it is also anti-American. Radicalism is an unsustainable paradox and harms the UN system as it now operates because it deprives it of real democratic support. Interactive partnership and effective influence within the UN system are reserved for those who submit ideologically to UN values and normative pretensions. Those who oppose do not have any place to go but out. The culture of the right to choose leaves us no choice but to choose the global paradigm. Sustainability is a categorical imperative, a diktat. Everything must submit to this imperative: religion, national policies, global policies, the market, education systems, health care, lifestyles, consumption and production patterns, the rights culture and so on. Will the exclusion process continue?

Should we allow this ideology to prevail and become institutionalized, should this global intellectual cleansing be achieved, the only still outstanding structures claiming legitimacy would be the values and mechanisms that the partners now seek to finalize. The definitive structures of world governance would be constructed on radical interests that are per essence divisive because they are not democratic. The objective of

strengthening the UN and global governance would then appear as the primary and most urgent objective of world politics. It would also be a wrong objective. And this is plainly the fundamental choice that we now must reject. We want instead a pluralistic, politically straightforward, and healthy world structure. We want pluralism and creative diversity. We do not want the UN to have a monopoly on values and norms and its bureaucracy to become the only legitimate institution of world order.

The logic of the paradigm is implosive in two ways. First, the paradigm carries with it an internal unsustainable contradiction: it advocates individualism but is really interested in implementing collectivism. It promotes individualism as the right to choose, reproductive and sexual rights and well-being, progressive education, the sovereignty of the individual and participation. But the individualistic agenda serves and submits to the collectivist agenda: the new values are instrumental to the resolution of global social problems—such as global inequity, poverty eradication, population stabilization, building a new global architecture, and sustainable development—and in general demand conformity to the global agenda. The paradigm attempts to reconcile individualism and collectivism as thesis and antithesis by resorting to a transforming synthesis described as holism and achieved variously through mechanisms we have exposed throughout the book such as integration, enlargement, transcendence, balance, transculturalism, or metamethodology. The dialectical process is a diktat, a cultural sham, an intellectual deception.

Second, the collectivist logic and UN global values are abstract and clash with reality. Real individuals, real schools, real business enterprises, national cultures, and every human community, locality, and nation have a specific identity. Personal and social reality are pluralistic by nature. How could UN norms and values, constructed by a few bureaucrats on the basis of states reports, UN indicators, partial and incomplete documents, expert consultations and studies, reflect the infinitely rich diversity of personal and cultural identity? These reports and studies are necessarily oversimplified, subjective, schematic and superficial if not erroneous and ideological. To devise global norms on that basis is undemocratic. Detail, specificity, identity, personal character, integrated holistic view get lost in the UN's impoverishing efforts to harmonize and globalize its norms and standards. Should the paradigm choose to impose its collectivist agenda on real communities instead of respecting their identity, it would contain the seeds of its own destruction, for any opposition between reality and idealist constructs is implosive. Reality always prevails in due course over ideological constructivism unless that constructivism is imposed by force.

Some concepts of the new paradigm, such as holism, people-centeredness, environmental protection, creative diversity, solidarity, participation and sustainability appeal to postmodern young men and women who are thirsting for harmony as well as self-expression, for a unifying vision of life, respect for their personal aspirations and participation in decisions that affect their lives. They hope for policies and institutions that care about the concrete reality of their daily life and provide them with stability, security, and spiritual values that would give them a sense of belonging. The paradigm claims to fulfill these aspirations, but it does so by distorting the person's identity through values presented as people-centered, but in fact collectivist. The paradigm has deceived young people.

How has the people-centered paradigm determined the individual's identity? It has used an abstract parameter with two coordinates: hedonism on the one hand and the new human rights—particularly the right to choose on the other. The major flaw of the paradigm's definition of identity is that it does not take reality as a basic starting and end point, but constructs personal identity through norms that have a collectivist end. In practice, people must internalize those norms through capacity building and empowerment. What applies to individuals is also true for gender, cultures, religions and nations: abstract norms are stuck on reality. Identity, thus understood, dramatically reduces reality in all its richness and complexity to empty or ideological norms.

A parameter using pleasure and the unalloyed right to choose as coordinates is utilitarian in the worst sense of the term. The right to choose is ultimately arbitrary (everybody acts as he chooses) and unsocial. If it is not conditioned by social institutions, it brings society back to the state of nature and contradicts the logic of the new paradigm, which is to impose social norms.

Besides, hedonistic individualism substitutes a reductionist utilitarian view of human destiny for a truly holistic perception of personal liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and creative diversity. As in most revolutionary movements, the new paradigm has translated personal aspirations into abstract global concerns such as gender equity, the environment, eliminating hunger, disease, ignorance, poverty, or the redistribution of wealth and income.

To measure development, the UN uses standards that are utilitarian. Quantitative measurements of achievements and failures are indeed indispensable in policymaking and social analysis. But the variables used in the human development index (HDI) are life expectancy at birth, education attainment, and GDP per capita, so that the basic dimensions of development are a long healthy life, the acquisition of knowledge, and a decent standard of living. These utilitarian standards seem to abstract personal identity from the global picture. Should happiness be reduced to pleasure, development to environmental preservation, education to social engineering, personal values to constructed universalistic values and the obligations of global citizenship, the paradigm would be reductionist and not holistic as it has claimed all along.

Identity, diversity, pluralism, and multiculturalism are essential to the paradigm. The paradigm has described the interactive unity achieved in participatory democracy as a mosaic or quilt made up of many parts, or as a bright multifaceted precious stone, a concert of many instruments. In truth, however, the dominant objective of the UN is to change the mentality and behavior of people in order to have them internalize and thus "own" the new global ethic. The system promotes identity but seeks global conformity to its own agenda. Promoting identity then becomes a strategy to have every individual culture, nation, gender, social situation, religion internalize UN values. The paradigm has no mature concept of social pluralism. The failure is understandable because family, religion, nation, and business enterprise as basic human communities have had no place in the paradigm's structure. As a consequence, pluralism has been reduced to a primarily abstract debate on toleration of differences, "accommodating diversity," balancing interests, and "inclusive" development for the victims of globalization.

As mentioned, in its approach to pluralism, the paradigm shifts from individualism to collectivism. To empower individuals and communities to identify their priorities, expand their choices, become "self-

actualizing,” ensure control over their resources, actions, and lives and achieve are the goals of sustainable development (individualism). But the system has proven to be more interested in formulating global norms to guide and catalyze social change than in development itself (collectivism).

The paradigm reduces liberty and creative diversity to the social commitments of the global citizen. It ignores the limits inherent in the human condition (the need for parental authority and for formal teaching in education, the dependence of workers on management and technology). It diverts families, schools, enterprises from accomplishing their specific purpose. At the same time, conscience, family bonds, love, and religion become in the paradigm personal concerns beyond the pale of public policy. The paradigm separates the social and the personal.

This ideological separation dissolves the bonds that every human person has with the diverse communities to which he or she belongs: family, job, church, associations, friends, nation and culture. Like most revolutionary ideologies of the past, the paradigm is not only reductionist but potentially totalitarian: it replaces these diversified bonds by an immediate and direct relationship between each individual and global governance. A total commitment is expected from the citizen.

The UN argued that globalization required *new* values and a *clarification* of traditional values. We answer: we don't need new global values, norms and institutions, global harmonization and standardization. We have it all. We have world religions. We have our democratic tradition of liberty. We have our national cultures. We don't need our traditions to be clarified by passing fashions. What we need is to return to our own values. We are all free, and we can choose. We want to think for ourselves.

The hijacking process consists of blending perennial values, enlarged or new rights, and leftist radical interests. De-hijacking is the reverse process: we disentangle our commitment from the agenda and then prioritize human aspirations over radical hedonism and the deliberate destructuring of family, marriage, education, religion, democratic traditions, and personal, gender, national, cultural, and religious identity.

As a first step, we will demystify the world conferences, UN normative power and moral authority, and the NGO movement. Clearly, the reliance of the UN system on NGO expertise has gone too far and must be deflated. The UN does not want to recognize that its function and mandate are ruled by the principle of subsidiarity. In other words, it does not recognize the limits of its mandate and the role proper to governments, family, religion and the market.

The second step is to have a positive reflection on the role of the business enterprise. The idealistic and abstract character of the paradigm dramatically clashes with the reality of every day business operations and relations. If implemented, the paradigm will either fail the test and be rejected, or make the enterprise jump out of its gears.

The evidence the partners do not recognize is that the free enterprise is a basic human community, not an abstract economic machine exclusively driven by profit and competition. The time has come to restore in our diverse cultures a positive image of the enterprise as one of the fundamental human experiences of personal and cultural growth and development.

The enterprise as basic human community is made up, not of anonymous forces and individuals ruled

by global values that can be collectively imposed, but of human persons each having its own capacities, aspirations, personality, talents, ideas, networks of social bonds, culture, tradition, beliefs and set of values. CEOs already recognize the difference between the abstract ideological individual and the individual as a concrete human being. The case study approach could be used to illustrate this point. François Michelin, chairman of Michelin, Inc., says that “to look at the other as an individual or as a person radically changes our perspective” (Michelin et al. 1998, p. 80, our translation). Speaking from his experience, he has “a practical trust in the human being.” The human being is “anxious to go beyond his limits and become what he is as soon as he is given the means.... Every person that we look at straight in the eyes, as a unique, free and responsible being, becomes as bright as the sun” (p. 206). There is no end to what we could do by freeing human energies, Michelin thinks.

The enterprise is a team. It is the rich diversity of individual persons, each with a name and a face, be he or she a worker, team leader, trade unionist, CEO, client, or shareholder, that constitutes the specificity of each enterprise and turns it into a dynamic and creative human community. People are bound together by a common spirit: the spirit of innovation, societal progress, an ethic of work, a sense of common responsibility, the eagerness to serve the constantly evolving needs of the client, the search for quality, the decisions of the management. The imposition from without of ideological norms threatens to break this vital bond within the enterprise, and with the people the enterprise has to serve.

People-centeredness is each business' concrete, paramount experience. Work relations, responsibility, performance are good for the person and make it grow and develop. They are governed by mutual trust not only in the other's integrity but also in his or her creative and innovative capacity. Each person wherever he or she stands in the enterprise has a contribution to make. “The day you omit to consider somebody with this potential, this prodigious seed he carries within him, it is yourself that you kill without knowing it” (p. 92). The experience of responsibility in the enterprise humanizes people and actualizes their sense of dignity. Responsibility educates them through failures and successes. It challenges employees to use their creative imagination to innovate. It forces them to confront their ideas with others. Employees grow as individual persons and, through team work, as social beings.

Michelin's experience is that capitalism offers the individual the opportunity to grow. The human being, “in order to grow ... must constantly assess the consequences of his acts. Capitalism offers him the opportunity to be responsible” (p. 78–79). Economic liberalism, he continues, “consists in considering the other as a unique being” and not as an object (p. 91). Michelin reminds us that “profit comes from *pro facere*”: in order to achieve. “It is what must be set aside ‘to achieve’ and go further. (p. 72) The enterprise is first and foremost a service: “on the day we forget that we produce objects for the purpose of serving others, we commit an error that may prove to be fatal” (p. 56).

Consumerism has generated a negative view of, or even a revulsion for matter. The experience of workers in the enterprise is the opposite. They have a positive view of the raw material that they themselves carefully and proudly transform to create an object that will be socially. As Michelin explains, “in the manufacturing process, one must have an in-depth knowledge of the nature of the material we work on. One

must love it... It is astonishing to see to what extent a tire is for many something that is round, black, dirty and that smells bad... I can assure you that nobody in the factory has such a perception!" (p. 39) Workers actually respect and even love the raw material they work on and marvel at the transformation they operate through their own work.

Let us free ourselves from the bondage of normative global governance and get back to matter, the person, the family, the enterprise, world religions, the nation state as they are, in their positive reality. François Michelin recalls the words his grandfather used to say to his team leaders: "Your number one duty is to love those you are responsible for" (p. 176). Let us dare to restore love not only in the family but in our cultures: love—a word the paradigm never used.

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