Collapse, Brasilianisation or Balance: 
Blade Running in Tough Times

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Abstract

The alarm signals cannot be ignored: population explosion, famine, clear-cut rain forests, exploited mineral deposits, 
global warming. As it stands, the current global economic structure and, in particular, the current world economic 
system is driving humankind into ruin - through overexploitation of nature and raw materials and the lack of social 
and cultural balances between the countries and the cultures of the world. Within the framework of an unleashed 
globalized economy we are in the process of assaulting the social, cultural, and ecological capital, worldwide. The 
globalization of the economy, triggered above all by the incredible new possibilities of information technology, leads 
into the wrong direction due to inadequate worldwide rules. The body of rules governing world trade today as 
represented mainly by the World Trade Organization (WTO), together with the worldwide closely linked financial 
systems, increasingly determine economy around the globe. Questions concerning environment, society and cultural 
diversity are insufficiently addressed. The result is uncoordinated growth and increasing social divisions in nearly all 
countries. The pressure on economically weaker cultures is increasing. Herein lies one of the main reasons for the 
conflicts between the West and the Islamic world.

The issues at hand are closely connected with the topics of the EnviroInfo/I-KNOW conference 2006 in Graz. How do we deal with the environment, do we have the right knowledge and how do we manage knowledge, and how do we manage world affairs? The answer to all these questions will determine our future, which might not be pleasant. Collapse, due to ecological disaster and brasileianisation, as an unsymmetrical way of “burden-sharing” to avoid a resource crisis, are realistic options. If we want a better way into the future, if we want a healthy environment, equity, peace and a sustainable development, something else is needed: A concept of balance in the form of a worldwide eco-social market economy, initiated by some kind of Global Marshall Plan as an immediate step of action. Managing environmental knowledge in the right way will be a cornerstone in such a design.

In the following, the balanced approach is discussed in some more detail. This is the eco-social market framework reflecting the flavour of European countries’ approach to market economies as well as Asian network based models of that kind. The approach proposed is a double factor-10 concept of growth combined with increased eco-efficiency over the coming 50 to 100 years, made possible by strict standard-oriented global frameworks, combined with substantial co-financing of development. This should be established via global contracts for global governance, in particular between the rich world and the developing world. In this context, also the future formula 10→4:3:4 will be discussed. The patterns to be followed are those of the extension processes within the European Union and the kind of contracts and co-financing schemes used in these transitions.

The cultural side is addressed in this context essentially. In particular, it should become clear that more social equity all around the globe is an important prerequisite for more wealth, a better balance between cultures, fairness among regions, and for sustainability. In particular, cultures are not seen as the primary

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cause of conflicts, but rather as representatives of cultural “forms” by which certain types of unfairness, injustice and divides are articulated in a societal context. Unfairness, injustice and not caring for the dignity of other people is seen as a most disastrous trend of the present form of globalisation and the deeper reason for all kind of conflicts including what is called “terror” from one side and “self-defence” from the other.

The eco-social concept of balance proposed is based on ethical and moral fundamental principles that are shared by all of the world religions. It is inspired by the Earth Charter and Global Ethics. Furthermore, it follows the golden rule of reciprocity: “Do unto others as you would have other have do unto you”. With regard to the people living today and with regard to future generations, this leads to the special responsibility that we, as human beings, have for planet earth, with respect to our own interests, let alone the particular own value that the biosphere and the living world has by itself. At the same time with regard to today’s societies a responsibility for the dignity of all humans and the enabling of all human potentials arises. From this the necessity of an ecologic and socio-cultural orientation of every responsible and ethically sustainable human action follows. The proposed concept of a Global Marshall Plan for a World in Balance has this orientation. It consists of five strategic cornerstones that are strongly interrelated; the efficient implementation of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals requiring additional 100 billion US$ per year on average in the period of 2008-2015 for development cooperation (without taking into account increases due to the level of inflation) that can be financed for instance by global taxes. This is about 70 billion US$ per year more than to date are promised as additional funds, mostly from the European Union, for the same period.

Beyond the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the focus is on the establishment of a worldwide Eco-social Market Economy by co-financing of development paired with an adequate global institutional design. That way a fair worldwide partnership shall be realized. Integral part of the concept is the promotion of Good Governance on all societal levels as well as coordinated and coherent forms of basis-oriented implementation of development cooperation.

The five core goals will be illustrated below.

1. **Rapid implementation of the globally agreed upon Millennium Development goals of the United Nations** as an intermediate step for a just world order and sustainable development.

2. **Raising of an average of additional 100 billion US$ per year for development cooperation during the period of 2008-2015.** This is to be seen in comparison with the level of overseas development aid and purchasing power in 2004. Additional financing at least at this level is necessary to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to act in favour of global public goods that are interlinked with the MDGs. Therefore, these additional funds should solely be used for this purpose.

3. **Fair mechanisms for the raising of necessary funds.** The Global Marshall Plan supports the aspired target of a 0.7 percent financing level for overseas development aid on the basis of national budgets. Nevertheless, even if optimistically assumed, there will be lacking considerable volumes of funds compared to the necessary financial requirements for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, and due to the principal considerations concerning the design of global markets, an essential part of the funds needed for the implementation of the Development Millennium Goals should be generated through levies on global transactions and on the consumption of global public goods.

4. Gradual realization of a worldwide Eco-Social Market Economy and overcoming of the market fundamentalism through the establishment of a better regulatory framework for the world
This should happen in line with a **fair global contract**. For these reforms and an interlinking of existing regimes and institutions for the economy, environment, social life, and culture are needed (for example in regulation areas such as UN, WTO, IWF, World Bank, ILO, UNDP, UNEP and UNESCO).

5. The prerequisites for the attainment of a reasonable regulatory framework are a **fair collaborative partnership on all levels** and an adequate flow of resources. The promotion of good governance, the fight against corruption as well as coordinated and grass-roots oriented forms of appropriation of funds are considered to be decisive for **self-directed development**.

To conclude: In the 21st century sustainable growth for the benefit of all countries in the world is possible. At the same time living conditions for billions of people can be improved significantly, and diversity of and balance between cultures can be taken care of, while nature can be effectively protected. However, this requires the right framework for the global economic system and global governance. There is still a long way to go.

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