



Summary of the presentations, discussions and conclusions of the

IX. Bled Forum Declaration on Foresight Knowledge Based Governance Responses to Climate Change

“It is too late to say later”,

Jerome C. Glenn, Director of the Millennium project, winner of the Bled Forum on Europe Award 2008.

We, the participants of the IX Bled Forum on Europe, have prepared the following conclusions which are the outcome of the work of four plenary sessions involving presentations, conclusions of the chairs of sessions and the debate of distinguished participants. These conclusions form a substantial supplement to the **IX Bled Forum on Europe Declaration** which was adopted as a final statement of the Forum and will be addressed to relevant global, EU and South-east European stakeholders. The following challenges were identified as being so important that they call for the immediate action of social actors.

Global strategy: the direct impacts of global climate change are local or regional. They are complex and cut across policy issues. Moreover, indirect transnational impacts can also induce strategic challenges at the international level. In order to address global climate change a global strategy is needed, starting with a ‘Global War Room on Climate Change’ as proposed by Sir Richard Branson at the UN General Assembly thematic debate on climate change. The mainstreaming of environmental factors into all other policies is becoming indispensable.

Knowledge-based approaches: in order to address these new challenges knowledge-based governance approaches on the local, national and international levels are needed.



Holistic approach: climate change questions are far too often observed in a narrow perspective. Since the question is complex, to find answers an integrated, cross-sectoral and holistic approach should be taken.

Rethink values: climate change is not an isolated problem caused solely by the increase in GHG emissions. It is strongly connected with traditional values which are not easy to change. Problems of growing populations and energy consumption in connection with climate change should be put high on the public agenda. The core of the current production system (rapid economic growth) should also be addressed.

Partnerships and alliances: starting with an alliance of the USA/China/EU. There is already a strong consensus about the need to react to climate changes within the EU. The EU should take a leading position and play the role of a catalyst to accelerate the strengthening alliance between the USA and China as the most important global players.

Fair distribution of burdens: according to scientific evidence there is no doubt that poor and less developed countries will take on the biggest share of the burden of climate change. It is necessary to balance these burdens with appropriate financial and knowledge support to these countries. Poor and less developed countries have the right to achieve the quality of life which can only be achieved through economic development. Therefore, the global community is responsible for helping them to achieve their legitimate goals without causing global damage.

Risk assessment: a comprehensive assessment of the potential impacts of global climate change has to include cross-cutting issues, be multi-stakeholder based and trans-boundary. Moreover, the need for a gendered approach to the risk assessment, including sex-disaggregated data, has to be highlighted.

Predictions and modelling: improving predictive modelling is important in order to enhance early warning systems. Moreover, multi-sectoral modelling can contribute to finding new strategies and setting the right priorities. Therefore, the use of foresight



methods is highly appreciated and should be stimulated as a tool for thinking about the future.

Internet-based networking: building up an Internet-based network and support for policy-makers can help in providing the information needed on a 'just in time' basis – in a format policy-makers can understand. The creation of an information system in which this information can be found is the first step and should be done as soon as possible.

Business sector: in debates about climate change this sector is often perceived as a source of problems. This is not an appropriate approach for the business sector has a lot to do and has already done much in this respect. Therefore, business must be seen as a partner in the process.

Civil society: strengthening the stakeholders and thus organisations of civil society can effectively influence decision-makers in both government and the economic sector. We need a critical mass of civil society that is concerned in order to influence decision-makers in government and the economic sector. Therefore, public information and education with regard to the risks of climate change have to remain on a high level. Training volunteers for public presentations could contribute to this. All groups within civil society should take on their part of the responsibility. Action should not only be taken by environmental NGOs but also and predominantly by all actors of civil society which are strong opinion-makers and have a great influence on people's core (e.g. religious) values.

Culture of science: building up a culture of science in a country is crucial if we want policy-makers to take the scientific forecast seriously. Bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and policy-making is a prerequisite for successfully coping with the environment security challenges we face.

Translation of scientific language into the language of policy-makers: there are many eminent scientists working on the topic of climate change. Their findings are



often not presented to policy-makers in the right way, thereby creating a gap between these two groups. Politicians are often oriented to short-term goals so it is important to identify appropriate entry points for climate information. This should be changed through the new and intensive ways of communicating scientific results in an understandable form. Too often only problems are stressed but, for optimal results, possible solutions (policy alternatives) should also be presented. Therefore, it is necessary to bridge this gap. Civil society should be used as a translator between these two groups of actors, which could also result in a strong partnership between all relevant groups of actors.

Internationalisation of research: a lot of money is being spent on research into climate change. But it is often fragmented between different national institutions. There is a need to pool research resources, create international funding schemes and thus optimise investments made in climate change research. Research capacities (human, technical and financial) should be built in poor and less developed countries.

The way of defining problems: climate change questions should not be addressed 'top-down' – from policy-makers only, but should also include initiatives and suggestions stemming from civil society.

Transinstitutions: we need 'transinstitutions' that bring together state actors, the economy, science, the humanities as well as NGOs as partners in sustainable collaborations. This could help bridge the gap between which measures are needed and what politicians accept.

Sharing of experiences and good practices: different countries and regions have varying approaches to dealing with the threat of climate change. There is need to establish a platform to share experiences and good practices. This could contribute to greater knowledge and consequently to ensuring a better quality of life.



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