



Dresden Manifesto – 10 Requests and Appeals to the G20 Government Leaders

Conclusion of the 2nd WORLD CULTURE FORUM in Dresden, Germany, and publication of a final communiqué

Since 2007, the WORLD CULTURE FORUM has highlighted the role played by cultures and civilizations in providing ultimate guidance on how to manage the interaction between individuals and nations. The Forum interprets “culture” as embracing our various cultures and civilizations from an integrative perspective. At the same time, the Forum mobilizes the potential of the cultural sector in the narrower sense as an effective mechanism for transforming thinking.

Even before the current global financial and economic crisis began, the WORLD CULTURE FORUM promoted the recontextualization of the economic sphere as a component of culture, following in the tradition of the Club of Rome, the World Ethos movement, and the Goi Peace Foundation.

Part 1: Thematic Positioning

1. Cultures as the Final Instance

Cultures and civilizations are the final instance for managing the interactions between individuals and nations. They clarify issues pertaining to values, ethics, and ways of achieving a balance between different social forces and motivations. They reveal what societies’ main concerns ultimately are and what mechanisms are used to pursue these concerns.

2. Core Principles

The core principles that have evolved in all great cultures and civilizations relate to the interrelationship between freedom and solidarity, universal human rights, responsibility for nature and the whole of creation, concern for the dignity of all human beings, fairness and responsibility between generations, enjoyment of activity, and enjoyment of life.

3. The Role of the Economy

The economy is an essential aspect of all cultures and civilizations. It supplies the goods and services on which our existence and development are based, opens up fields of action, provides scope for the division of labor, cooperation and competition, encourages innovation, gives us security in our everyday lives, and creates opportunities for the future.

4. Need to Set Limits for the Economy

In spite of its importance for society, the economy remains just one aspect of culture, in common with coexistence, reproduction, the arts, science, and the media. And culture must define limits for the economy to keep it on the right track. The growing dominance of narrow and one-sided economic criteria in more and more aspects of life in recent years brought the world to the edge of the abyss – long before the current global financial and economic crisis.

5. A Sustainable World Economic Order

The experiences of successful nation states and the sustainability movement can provide a foundation for a sustainable world economic order. The aim must be to achieve and preserve a sustainable balance between economic, ecological and social demands by applying enforceable rules, incentives and sanctions. The self-regulation and internal control mechanisms of free market fundamentalism must be replaced by a sustainable market economy regulated worldwide in accordance with ecological and social principles: an ecosocial model instead of market radicalism.



Part 2: Looking with Hope to the G20

6. The New Role of the G20 Represents Major Progress

The WORLD CULTURE FORUM welcomes the resolution adopted at the G20 meeting in Pittsburgh making the G20 – instead of the G8 – the main forum for all coordination issues associated with the global economy, finances, resources etc. – interacting with the United Nations, of course. This is a decision of epoch-making importance, arguably the most important and durable result of the current recession.

7. G20 and World Democracy

Mankind will only have a bright future on this planet if we all act in unison. This presupposes universal participation, attentive dialog, and fair consideration of all interests with regard to the resolution of issues of worldwide importance. The WORLD CULTURE FORUM sees the establishment of the responsibility of the G20 for regulating all aspects of human and national interaction as an important step toward more democracy at world level. Two-thirds of the world population and over 90% of world economic output are now represented in this key forum.

8. Addressing Critical Issues

The WORLD CULTURE FORUM welcomes the courage shown by the G20 in immediately tackling seminal issues relating to hidden interests cleverly concealed behind – apparent – economic and even scientific taboos. We are at last seeing critical discussions about such topics as cracking down on tax havens, taxing global financial activities, and preventing the unjustified enrichment of individuals in leading positions. The G20 must keep up this endeavor – not only because it is fair, but also because it is the only way to relieve countries of their debts and to fund global environmental and climate protection.

9. Going Boldly Forward

The WORLD CULTURE FORUM calls on the governments of the G20 to continue to pursue their bold policy – we need the G20 to coordinate global processes. The WORLD CULTURE FORUM calls on the G20 to take action. We would like to see a transition from market fundamentalism to an ecologically and socially regulated global market economy. We would welcome arguments in favor of a universally applicable concept of ownership designed to serve the common good that systematically regulates the financial sector and addresses taxation issues in terms of global added value. Sustainability should become a basic requirement, as should commitment to a United Nations parliamentary assembly; promoting Muhammad Yunus's ideas on the role of social entrepreneurship as an additional pillar of the economy; and supporting Transparency International in fighting corruption. These would all help the United Nations fully implement its millennium development goals.

10. Re-asking Old Questions

The WORLD CULTURE FORUM calls on the governments of the G20 to systematically challenge established thinking habits. When are vested interests hiding behind taboos? How can truly relevant criteria be identified? Speaking on behalf of the WORLD CULTURE FORUM, we firmly believe that the great cultures and civilizations hold the key. Fortunately, their substance in each individual case and the degree of coherence between their various manifestations are of such high quality that they can form the basis for a new, balanced future, which we can create even or especially by transforming society through art and/or culture in the narrower sense, because these can act as a communication platform by appealing to the emotions. Against this background, the WORLD CULTURE FORUM will be able to make an important contribution to a social dialog for a balanced culture in the international arena.



Final Remarks

The current situation is both highly challenging and extremely critical. But opportunities are born out of crises: When threats abound, solutions are found more readily. The challenge facing us today is to find ways to regulate the global economy appropriately, as part of a yet-to-be-created, sustainable new civilization for the whole world, based on laws of sustainability, democracy, responsibility, fairness, and freedom.

The great civilizations and cultures provide a good compass to guide us on our journey to a better future.

Dresden, 10th of October, 2009

2nd WORLD CULTURE FORUM initiative for a "balanced culture" alliance

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The organizers have pleasure in inviting you to the 3rd WORLD CULTURE FORUM, to be held in Dresden from February 24 through 26, 2011.