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LANGUAGE FOR A NEW WORLD: from *sustainable* to *regenerative*

‘The current language around climate change and its solutions is inadequate and even counterproductive. Specifically, we question whether *sustainability*, the default name for most current efforts towards preservation of life on the planet, keeps us locked into the assumption that whatever we do, we must also sustain the system that is currently in place....

Regenerative - regenerative design, regenerative society, regenerative economics - appeals to us as a more ambitious and dynamic term commensurate with the type of ambitious and dynamic actions that are required for the survival of humanity now. Many of us define sustainability in terms of the health of bio-systems, but not in terms of our lifestyle, ie, pursuing growth of our economy without regard to the impact of this on others, or the bio-systems.

Sustainability, the ability to sustain life to a set of standards, needs to be replaced by a new paradigm. As a call-to-action, what sustainability seeks to sustain above all is some version of our current way of life, even though the evidence is totally overwhelming that it cannot continue. Living processes, generally, don't

just endure or persevere. Life either flourishes and blooms, evolves and transforms, or it stagnates and dies. The rhetoric of sustainability tends to support the belief that our current form of post-industrial capitalism can be reformed, that it can persist in something close to its present order.

We propose that the new paradigm emerge from the ideals of regenerative culture. We can look at our current institutions and ideologies as a substrate, a foundation, providing the conditions for another level of transformation. According to chaos theory, the nonlinear dynamics of living organisms allow for the emergence of new orders of complexity, when a system reaches a high level of instability. As the monocultural, technocratic approach of post-industrial capitalism crumbles, a new worldview - a new way of being - is crystallizing.’

Source: Daniel Pinchbeck & Schuyler Brown, *The World In a State of Extreme Transition: moving from Sustainability to Regenerative Design*. Sent by Mary Boyd.

THE PERNICIOUS MYTH OF PERPETUAL ECONOMIC GROWTH

Nothing grows forever. The present human condition is predicated on one of the biggest lies ever - that the economy can grow indefinitely. It is blatantly obvious that infinite growth on a finite Earth is impossible. Yet, in

a self-serving contortion of logic, neo-liberal economists measure the well-being of a society by how fast the economy grows, with little regard to the state of natural assets, human equity, the welfare of ecosystems and of the

world's species and the extent to which people and society are happy. Living as if Earth's nature has no worth other than to be liquidated for consumption degrades ourselves and ecosystems, and can only end in our ruin socially and economically and the collapse of the biosphere.

Economic growth comes at enormous economic, social and environmental costs so long as we seek ever more material possessions while systematically degrading not only our habitat, but also our future resource base and potential for advancing broad-based community.

Source: Dr. Glen Barry, EcoInternet, New York City, 15 May, 2016

THREE GIANT INTER-RELATED TRADE AGREEMENTS

The Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) has been signed by all the twelve participating countries and the text has finally been exposed. These countries have yet to ratify the agreement and pass implementing legislation. The agreement will come into force when a minimum of 6 countries, including the two most populous, Japan and the USA, complete these two final requirements. This is not yet assured.

We have reported on the TPP over several Bulletins. We all need to know about two other giant trade deals currently being negotiated behind closed doors: the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)¹ and the Trade In Services Agreement (TISA).² Fifty countries are currently involved in TISA, ie, 23 members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) including the European Union (EU) of 28 countries. Here is a brief report of these proposed agreements.

RCEP

The RCEP rivals the TPP, being potentially double its size, including China and India, the two most populous countries and among the

¹ Involving 10 members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand.

² In addition to the EU, current TISA participants are Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Korea, Liechtenstein, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey and USA.

top fast-growing economies. Trade experts believe that eventually the two agreements will come together in a wider Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) agreement. But first, Washington and Beijing would have to resolve their differences and economic conditions improve. How long might this take? Some think ten to fifteen years.

The most recent round of RCEP negotiations took place at the end of April in Perth, Australia, and negotiations will resume in Auckland, New Zealand, 12 - 18 June. RCEP trade ministers will then meet 1 - 7 August, with a view to finalising the text by January 2017.

Fair trade groups in RCEP countries are demanding a more open and democratic process in the negotiations and oppose such harmful proposals as strengthened monopolies on medicines, Investor-State Dispute provisions and increases in temporary workers.

TISA

The TISA negotiations involve mostly industrialised countries led by the USA and Europe, with a minority of developing countries. Participation is open to all members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). China, while not yet a member, has applied to join TISA.

The negotiating texts were supposed to remain secret now and for five years after the deal is finalised or abandoned, but Wikileaks has recently released the most updated draft texts on three new annexes to the proposed agreement: State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs); Professional Services and New Provisions Applicable to All Services.

Already leaked texts covered financial services, e-commerce, movement of natural persons, telecommunications and transparency.

The recently released texts have been analysed by experts in several countries. Summarised here are comments from Dr Patricia Ranald, Convenor of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET), Sanya Reid Smith, legal adviser to the Third World Network, and Law Professor Jane Kelsey, Auckland University, New Zealand. Pat Ranald observes that New Provisions restrict possibilities for governments to require foreign companies to employ local workers. They would also make it harder for all the TISA countries to regulate global services companies effectively, including those in the finance sector. Recently the Panama Papers have revealed that global corporations need more, rather than less, regulation and so these secret TISA proposals are quite unacceptable.

Sanya Reid Smith points out that these same proposals would restrict the capacity for developing countries to regulate foreign investment

so as to promote development, which is what the industrialised TISA countries did when they were developing. The Professional Services annex would restrict how governments and professional associations might regulate requirements and standards for foreign services providers in a wide range of professional fields.

According to Jane Kelsey's analysis of the annex on State Owned Enterprises (SOEs), it is clear that China is the main target of the proposal of the USA to force SOEs to operate like private sector businesses. The proposal does not directly require countries to privatise, but 'creates the conditions for privatisation by stealth'.

The leaks expose the intention of corporations to use TISA to further tighten limits on democratically elected governments to legislate and regulate in the public interest.

Sources: Australian Financial Review, 27 April 2016; AFTINET Media Release 26 May 2016. Compiled by Alison Healey.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND CHINA

Increasing engagement

By September 2015, the volume of trade between Papua New Guinea (PNG) and China had reached US\$2.1 billion (6.17 billion kina), according to the Chinese Ambassador to PNG. This was an increase of 55% over the same period the previous year. Imports from China grew 46.55%, and exports to China by 71%. More commodities were sold to China than imported, which was good for Papua New Guinea. China's main imports were in PNG's commodities, particularly as a major buyer of PNG's liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Ambassador Li says that China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) is expected to buy natural gas from PNG for the next 20 years at two million tonnes per year

More companies in China are interested in in-

vesting in the resources and extractive industries in Papua New Guinea, says Li. The Zijin Company has already made investments in the Porgera gold mine which is progressing in its development. The Guangdong Rising Access Management has taken over from PanAust as the operator of the Frieda River copper-gold project and are planning to invest heavily there. And the China National Offshore Oil Corporation has begun oil well exploration in the Southern Highlands this year.

'There is more interest coming, bringing opportunities for enhanced cooperation between our two countries', says the Ambassador.

Source: Eric Balaria, The National (PNG), www.thenational.com

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN EUROPE

TRACE workshop: 'Future Trends in Human Trafficking'

TRACE (Trafficking as A Criminal Enterprise) is a two-year project funded by the European Union, May 2014 - May 2016. The project included a number of research activities, workshops and outreach efforts aimed at helping to develop an intervention strategy for disrupting the trafficking chain.

A workshop in late February focussed on new and emerging forms of trafficking in human beings, ie, forced criminality, forced begging, forced and sham marriages, the current migration flows to Europe and their impact on human trafficking. As well, the workshop discussed innovative tools and approaches to prevent trafficking. Present were government officials, representatives of nongovernmental and international organisations, national coordinators and rapporteurs, law enforcement representatives, social service providers and other stakeholders who work with human trafficking issues at an operative and strategic level.

The final event in the TRACE project will be a conference planned for the beginning of June in Brussels. For further information see www.trace-project.eu

Dutch Covenant on Sustainable Garments and Textiles

The Dutch government, civil society organisations, trade unions and textile and garment associations have agreed on a Covenant to support the elimination of child labour and forced labour in the textile and garment sector. What is unique to this Covenant is its commitment to identifying and addressing child labour and other abuses within three to five years. The Covenant will be signed by the organisations involved and the government if, within three months, at least 35 companies, representing together at least one-third of the sales in the Netherlands, join this initiative. The government, through its involvement in this Covenant, wants to 'scale up' national initiatives taken also in countries like Germany, Denmark, the UK and France to achieve cooperation at the European level.

GRETA Report on protection of children among refugees entering Europe

The Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), an initiative of the Council of Europe, published its 5th General Report in March 2016. It highlights widespread gaps in identifying and protecting victims of trafficking among asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. There are significant numbers of unaccompanied minors who go missing shortly after being placed in reception centres, and become exposed to further risks of trafficking and exploitation. GRETA, having evaluated the situation in 40 European countries, urges 36 of these to meet their legal obligations under the Council of Europe's Anti-trafficking Convention by improving both their identification of child victims of human trafficking and the quality of their supportive assistance to them.

GRETA President, Nicolas Le Coz, said: 'People trying to reach Europe are easy prey for traffickers, especially when they often face barriers to getting help. Their protection against traffickers depends on States' fulfilling their legal obligations'

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