

For a policy focused on viability

Xavier Ricard
Director of International Partnerships
CCFD-Terre Solidaire¹

The Development and Foreign Aid Assizes have now come to a close, having been launched in December 2012 by the Minister for Development, Pascal Canfin. During the closing conference, the President of the French Republic spoke of the need for an "ambitious" policy in the area of development aid.

But ambitious in what way, exactly? Despite the many working sessions that were held and a declared desire to bring together different families of French development policy stakeholders (associations, companies, local authorities and trade unions), the Assizes were ultimately unable to define the direction and focus for a renewed development policy.

The time is nonetheless ripe for reconsidering the meaning of "development" in the light of the great political, ecological and social challenges of the current time. We should no longer satisfy ourselves with slogans such as "sustainable development", "coherent public policy", or "innovation". The time has come to analyse the consequences of the civilisation crisis that we are currently going through in order to place "development" at the heart of a theoretical and political debate which addresses the future of human societies, confined as we are within the limits of our global ecosystem.

There is essentially a fundamental need to make our paths towards growth viable ones. The notion of viability could well prove to be of great use in reassessing development practices and strategies. This hypothesis should guide the creation of a new policy for research, which would aim to foster the expertise necessary for leading the transition towards viability (or a social and economic transition). In particular, this would involve new "prosperity" indicators, which would allow the real efforts being made by the government in terms of development to be appreciated. This conceptual and critical tool should inspire a new doctrine for foreign policy, particularly in the sphere of diplomacy. Whatsmore, alliances with international civil society stakeholders should also be assessed through this lens. The logical follow-on from these considerations would be a body bringing public authorities together with civil society. We propose that this come in the form of The Institute for Ecological and Social Transition, which would be placed under the authority of the Prime Minister and granted its own powers, with the various related entities being attached to it.

¹This note solely reflects the views of its author and not necessarily the positions of CCFD-Terre Solidaire.

1. The development notion at hand

a. Decoupling development and growth

The notion of development, forged in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, provided a response both to a moral imperative and to a geopolitical need. The former consisted of allowing humanity to correctly comply with the emancipation programme which had been put in place by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and subsequently by the 1966 Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The latter on the other hand, the geopolitical need, consisted of industrialised countries fostering economic development in third world countries while also guaranteeing their own supplies of raw materials and markets for their products, with their need for raw materials rising in order to meet their own economies' growth needs. Therefore, from the outset there was a need to set firm bases for a trade partnership between "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries.

However, this notion is now in crisis: by governments progressively renouncing their tools of regulation (exchange controls, capital flow controls, trade and customs barriers) and their prerogatives as public authorities, they have allowed private stakeholders (particularly large multinational companies) the ease with which to organise the global economy in accordance with their wishes. Global economic integration today is such that it is as though time and space have been abolished: in a few seconds, the decisions of market operators have huge consequences on one region or another. Local territories have been the birthplace of culture, the point of contact between human societies and their immediate environment. However, now their existence is threatened by the market, which coaxes them to "specialise" in a specific field in accordance with entirely abstract economic needs which have no link with local constraints. This dynamic encourages a form of collective irresponsibility. Time-honoured cities see the very conglomerates that they had mothered turning against them, at the very time at which they are striving to consolidate their positions in the face of global competition. Emerging countries also hope to benefit from their comparative advantages, in an environment of deregulated economic competition, in order for them to obtain the international influence that they have been lacking. Any form of international regulation is therefore impossible: it is suspended as a result of global consensus, which is seemingly impossible to achieve².

This new world "order" is not viable: in forty years the world has progressively become aware of the limits inherent in our global ecosystem. Ecological crises are multiplying. The warming of the climate is an almost undisputed reality³. If current trends continue, by 2050, greenhouse gas emissions will have risen by 80% in comparison with their 1990 levels, instead of falling by 80%, as per governments sticking to the objective of limiting warming to 2°C, as outlined by

²The so-called "Rio + 20" UN Summit provided shocking proof of this state of affairs. See Ricard Lanata, "L'échec de la conférence de Rio : vers la fin du multilatéralisme ?", La Croix, 4 July 2012.

³The last report of none other than the National Intelligence Council (United States) admits the inevitability of the situation given current trends. (http://www.dni.gov/nic/NIC_2025_project.html)

the IPCC⁴. Therefore, despite the drop in energy and carbon intensity, carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels have increased by 80% since 1970. Today emissions are nearly 40% higher than in 1990 - the Kyoto base year. Since 2000, they have increased at a yearly rate of over 3%⁵.

Furthermore, the current global economic growth rate is unsustainable, given that two thirds of its increase is based on greater extraction of fossil energy resources, particularly hydrocarbons. Only one third of global growth can be attributed to technological innovation⁶. This is an age-old situation: the industrial revolution is largely inseparable from the discovery of abundant energy, which cost almost nothing to extract for a long period. To our current knowledge, there is no energy source which outdoes oil in terms of production costs and energy returns⁷. This condemns us to a stagnation in the global economic growth rate, which at best will hover around 1% a year on average. Given the way the economy is currently run, this rate will not provide decent employment to the billions of individuals who will reach adulthood by 2050, and nor will it give work to those who are made unemployed as a result of the rise in work productivity, which stems partly from programmes for modernising agriculture inherited from the green revolution⁸.

Therefore, for political, ecological and economic reasons, development can no longer be associated with “growth” in global economic activity and the idea that countries in the Global South need to “catch up” with the GDP per inhabitant levels of OECD countries. The global economy as we know it cannot continue to grow. A scenario based around across the board catch-up and a 2% yearly growth rate in world GDP is politically and economically unrealistic and would also drag us into a major ecological disaster: “with a 2% yearly growth rate from 2050 to 2100, the economy would be 40 times its current size in 2100. From whatever angle

⁴ It would therefore be necessary to reduce carbon intensity in the economy by about 5% per year, bringing the carbon intensity of about 0.8kg CO₂/US\$ to 0,04 kg CO₂/US\$, or rather a figure which is 20 times lower! The current downward trend for “carbon” intensity does not go over 0.7% per year, and it is largely compensated by demographic growth and a global rise in GDP per inhabitant). The carbon intensity (T) of the global economy has dropped by 0.7% since 1990. Over the same period, the population (P) increased by 1.3% per year, and the average income per inhabitant (A) by 1.4%. Therefore, global emissions grew by $P+A+T = 1,3+1,4-0,7 = 2\%$ per year. Here we are applying the simplified IPAT equation: see Tim Jackson, *Prosperity without growth. The transition towards a sustainable economy*. Brussels: De Boeck, 2010, p. 86 sq.

⁵ Ibid p. 81.

⁶ See Gaël Giraud and Cécile Renouard, *Le facteur 12. Pourquoi il faut plafonner les revenus*. Paris: Carnets Nords/ Montparnasse, 2012, notamment pp 82-93.

⁷ See Richard Heinberg. *Pétrole : la fête est finie. Avenir des sociétés industrielles après le pic pétrolier*. Paris : Demi-Lune, 2008.

⁸ Henri Rouillé d’Orfeuil estimates that 1.45 billion is the number of jobs that could be lost as a result of agricultural modernisation and the freeing up of agricultural trade. See Rouillé d’Orfeuil, « Exclusions paysannes, désorganisation du marché du travail et travail décent » (<http://terrethique.org/petits-dejeuners/henri-rouille-dorfeuil-exclusions-paysannes-desorganisation-du-marche-du-travail-et-travail-decent/3/>). Also see « Pour des agricultures intensives en travail », *Projet*, N°332, Février 2013.

this is viewed, no less than every dollar earned will have to be decarbonised in order to achieve carbon objectives”⁹.

b. Going from catch-up to viability

Therefore, this analysis condemns any concept of development founded on catch-up and growth. This concept has nevertheless governed the practices of development stakeholders for sixty years, and particularly those of multilateral and national agencies. It is an utmost necessity to think out the collective destiny of human societies, no longer basing this on the paradigm of growth and catch-up, but rather on viability, as Michel Griffon suggests. This notion has been borrowed from biology, and is stronger than that of “sustainable development”, the myriad meanings and epistemological imprecision of which have aroused a great deal of criticism.

Viability is decoupled from growth in the “volume” of trade in goods and services, usually measured through GDP. A great many studies show that quality of life does not significantly increase when GDP per inhabitant rises above 10-15,000 US\$ per year. All viability policies should therefore be aiming to stabilise the global economy around this average figure and to guide human activity back towards sectors, production methods and trade which are compatible with a “balance” in the global ecosystem¹⁰.

The shape that such an economy would take is starting to become clear. Tim Jackson’s book, *Prosperity without growth*, is now a recognised authority in the case of Western economies. In France, many key figures have made important contributions to the current reworking of theories¹¹. A “viable” economy is one which is heavily based around relocalisation (locating the different stages of trade in certain places in accordance with regulation which makes active subsidiarity at all levels its main principle), a circular economy (one which steps up the functions of recycling and makes beneficial use of ecosystem cycles), an intensely ecological economy (intensifying the functions of ecosystems), with low work productivity (in other words, labour intensive) and which is based on small units of production which are governed by the double imperative of profitability and social usefulness (meaning that these are activities belonging to the social and solidarity economy, or at the very least are compatible with its demands).

⁹ See Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹⁰ The notion of balance entered into economic literature with the founding work of Herman Daly, *Toward a steady state economy*, London: Freeman and Co. Ltd., 1973. Ecological balance is defined by a constant stock of physical capital which can be maintained by a low exchange in materials, below the regenerative and assimilative capacities of ecosystems. Daly’s analyses are now receive a great deal of renewed interest, and their author recently published a number of texts which aimed to update his writings.

¹¹ See among others Jean Gadrey, *Adieu la croissance* (Paris : Les petits matins, 2010) ; Bernard Perret ; *Pour une raison écologique* (Flammarion 2011), Pierre Calame, *Traité sur l’oeconomie*, FPH : 2009. Two special editions can also be seen on this topic of the journal *Projet* (« Comdamnés à produire toujours plus ? », *Projet*, N° 324, décembre 2011, and « De Prométhée à Noé », *Projet*, N°317, juillet 2010).

In order to achieve this, hybrid use of resources must be carried out (public/private), with the term for such an approach being a “plural economy”. An economy of this type is largely based on immaterial activities (research, culture and education), volunteering (made possible thanks to a huge reduction in working hours in industrial economies), on an overhauling of production (with a vast public investment programme partly funded by direct monetary emission by the ECB¹²) and on agroecology – which on its own could be the underpinning aspect which the new ecological economy is organised around¹³.

This reflection is currently being extended towards the economies of third world countries (including emerging economies). As a matter of fact, in Latin America, Asia and Africa, ever more voices are making themselves heard, proposing an economic and social alternative which would replace “development” in its current neoliberal and extractivist form. These economists have got together in international networks and their work should be encouraged. An ecological economy on a global level would certainly stem from “deglobalisation” (which is tantamount to relocalisation of trade and production, particularly on a regional scale), theorised by Walden Bello, who calls for the consolidation of regional economic cooperation bodies in particular¹⁴.

Intellectuals are backing a trend which partly came into being within civil society, the most recent and fitting embodiment of which in Europe is the transition town movement, with Rob Hopkins as its current main advocate¹⁵. Initiatives of the same type are flourishing in different continents, and particularly so in Latin America¹⁶.

c. The scenarios: power rivalry or humanisation

We are thus confronted with two possible scenarios: either we follow the route of rivalry, spurred on by the current economic system which is centred on growth and competing for access to ever scarcer resources, or, to the contrary, we resolutely commit ourselves to the path of international cooperation guided by one key word: viability.

Conflicts over access to resources could intensify, with ferocious competition setting nations and their industrial “champions” against one another in the fight to conserve or acquire technological supremacy. Such a scenario would seriously compromise “development”. In such a situation, the modern ideological order (particularly the notion of progress) and the social class which brought it into being and which has historically been the driving force behind it (the bourgeoisie) would be cast aside in favour of a new neofeudal order, the social

¹² On this point, see Giraud et Renouard, *op. cit.*

¹³ See Ricard Lanata, « l’agroécologie : noyau dur d’une alternative au capitalisme », in *Projet*, n° 332, février 2013.

¹⁴ See Walden Bello : *Deglobalization : ideas for a new world economy*. Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006.

¹⁵ See Rob Hopkins, *The transition handbook*. London: Green Books, 2008.

¹⁶ See Ricard Lanata, « La société civile : laboratoire d’alternatives au productivisme », in *Projet*, N°324, 2011.

actor of which would be the hyperbourgeoisie, which would be sociologically plutocratic. What we would see disappear would be social progress based on the pledge of continuous growth in wealth, since this wealth could be redistributed. We know that the great social compromises of the post-war period were built on this expectation, which was partly unfounded. In its place, institutional setups for control and “security” came into being. Faced with the impossible task of increasing the overall volume of economies, these institutions rather aimed to put in place a stranglehold which would benefit a reduced elite of oligarchs thanks to technoscience¹⁷. This oligopolistic world would also allow for the rise in power of mafia groups, in the same way as what can be seen in Central America and particularly Mexico¹⁸, the Balkans, Japan, etc.

However, such a scenario is not inevitable. The burgeoning global middle class, shaped by their use of the internet as well as by their own close-up experience of the social and environmental crisis brought on by deregulation around the world, can help in changing the geopolitical situation. This broadening of the middle class is without doubt one of the most significant phenomena of recent decades. Up until now, this new middle class (particularly in China and Brasil) has been eager to consume and have no dreams for questioning the rules which govern the global economy. This new class readily adopts the nationalist rhetoric of being an “emerging” economy. However, given that “copycat” rivalry between powers leads towards a dead-end in a geophysical and environmental sense as well as economically and politically, this new middle class actually finds itself confronted with an internal contradiction: it owes its existence to a certain form of integration and development system which is not viable. Its fate is inextricably linked with “globalisation” in the form that we know it: the two are therefore destined to die off together, unless some kind of alternative is found, some makeshift raft built, in order to paddle away from disaster. Turning back will not provide any solutions, but nor will hastily running forward into a brick wall. The middle class will become increasingly aware of this reality as it watches and sees how free competition and non-renewables extraction continues, heightening its pace and spreading across the globe, condemning it to chronic insecurity¹⁹. In order for the middle class to guarantee its living standards and maintain the independence that it gained through increasing labour productivity, it could find a way of reinventing itself and convincing itself of the need for a global viability policy, above all if it is spurred on in doing so by its elites. Of course, it will have to give up on some of its aspirations, such as infinitely rising levels of income per inhabitant, in favour of the security that would be provided by an economic system founded on co-responsibility and solidarity. Such a scenario goes hand in hand with the global refounding of international

¹⁷ This scénario is taking place, as shown by Giraud et Renouard (*op. cit.*). Also see Hervé Kempf, *Fin de l'Occident, Naissance du monde*, Paris : Seuil 2010.

¹⁸ This scenario can be brought close to that which the NIC calls “Gini over the bottle”.

¹⁹ The Chinese middle class, a result of the economic boom of the last thirty years, is already casting a wary eye on certain companies. Since some are unable to put up with a greater increase in the hourly cost of labour in China, production is outsourced to other countries such as Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. This difficulties add to others such as the slowing of European demand, victim itself of deindustrialisation. China is therefore limited to developing its interior and regional market in order to avoid recession. It will therefore follow the path of relocating trade. It will not be able to do it peacefully and without clashes unless negotiation with the main business leaders takes place and unless an East-Asian bloc is consolidated which is based around a true policy of regional solidarity.

governance, which could bring together traditional stakeholders such as states and multilateral organisations with civil society “networks”, who base their structure around the main challenges, spreading themselves differently across different regions. Scientists, NGOs and businesses eager to join the ecological and social transition and who are willing to accept its constraints, could play a key role in creating this new world order. The French government could also play its own part by implementing steps towards this new order within its own borders before promoting it on a global level. These changes could ultimately require a major overhaul of the constitution in order to create a previously unheard of “ecological democracy”²⁰.

d. Here and out there

As can be seen, such a scenario would tear apart the distinction between developed and “developing” countries, since both of them are facing the same challenge regardless of their short term interests, *mutatis mutandis*. This challenge is that of embedding their political, economic and social dynamics within a “roadmap” towards viability. Without a doubt, this problem is to be tackled differently depending on which side of the 15,000 US\$ GDP per inhabitant per year threshold one finds oneself²¹. Those on one side of the threshold will have to reduce their energy and resource consumption per inhabitant while fomenting other types of production and work. This is known as the social and economic transition and is an experience that many social movements in Europe and the United States can bear witness to. For those on the other side of the threshold, growth strategies will have to be inverted, no longer aiming towards “becoming a part” of the new world order of deregulated competition, but rather focusing on stabilising economies around a balancing point following a phase of transition. The aim would be to ensure that trade is as regional and as relocalised as possible and to ensure that long term collective investments are made which guarantee viability (investments in energy, public transport, living spaces which have a high added value for the environment, reorganising the interconnections between the city and the countryside, etc.)²². A viability policy of this type, applied to low- or middle-income countries is slightly different from current practices in the area of development since it ensures that all investments are analysed

²⁰ Of which, Dominique Bourg, for example, set the principles in his publication *Vers une démocratie écologique*. Paris : Seuil 2010.

²¹ We suggest keeping this figure as a guide for hypothesis. It represents the upper level of a range which goes from 10 to 15,000 US dollars per inhabitant.

²² Here, we only look at the purely economic variables of a programme of global convergence. It is clear that the problem of viability encompasses all aspects of social living, and that the way in which each society and each culture conceives of and takes part in this policy must be envisaged in a specific way. From this point of view, “viability” today is what “development” was yesterday: one must be careful not to reduce the term to a slogan but to the contrary, care more about its meaning “within the situation”. Taking up the path to viability also demands that in the name of future generations, the dream of “modernisation” is sacrificed. This is a dream that many societies, including those that appear to be traditional, share. This is why the problem of viability is in part linked to the project of modernity, and we can call it a deepening. This is because it retains the notion of autonomy but gives up on a “false universal aspect”, a form of autonomy that is purely abstract and which turns out to be centred on Europe to the benefit of an approach with is well-focused and intercultural. On this point, see, for example, Immanuel Wallerstein : *L'Universalisme européen. De la colonisation au droit d'ingérence*, Paris : Demopolis, 2008.

in terms of the resilience of the region in question, subjecting investments to a “transition” strategy, with stages that must be progressively brought to an end through a debate which brings together public authorities and civil society and which leads to binding agreements.

There are two facets to this ecological and social transition: on the one hand degrowth in production and the exchange of goods, and on the other, “viable” and therefore limited growth in production and goods exchange. Both of these facets will tend to drift towards one another. This is why they should be seen together as one, with a renewed form of cooperation founded on this asymptote. This is the convergence of our economies in a global scenario of viability, which should become the objective of “development”, replacing the idea of catch-up. This form of cooperation involves, first and foremost, scientific and technical cooperation of a new type.

2. A new policy for research and innovation

What characteristics would a policy of research and innovation inspired by the notion of viability have?

a. Based on North/South

From what has been said above, it follows that a policy of this type would closely bring together researchers from developed countries with those in developing countries. This is because such a policy has to provide elements which allow for the convergence of economies and societies towards viable, balanced situations on a macro level to be thought out. Therefore, “research for development” should no longer be a specific area of research. Without a doubt, certain individual situations which are characteristic of low-income countries require specific scientific and technical abilities to be put in action, such as tropical agronomy, anthropology, innovation, so-called “intermediary” technologies, the political economics of post-colonial societies, etc. Nevertheless, these disciplines should all be carried out while bearing in mind the objectives in the field of shared research and innovation policies. For example, the new theoretical field of ecological economics should mobilise teams of researchers in the Global North and South in order to set out “transition scenarios” which are viable on a global level, taking into account all factors which may determine success such as production conditions, the interdependence of economies, etc. Furthermore, agroecological research on seeds, cultural practices, land planning, etc., should be subject to cross-analysis since it is clear that certain research conclusions or technological innovations are applicable both in the Global North and South, since it is said that a certain number of conditions for production must converge such as enhancing small-scale farming, increasing average surface area for production, promoting mixed farming and livestock breeding, developing small distribution circuits, encouraging industrial innovation to adapt the production process in order to allow it to encompass the widest variety of forms of production possible, etc. Some research appears on the surface to be of interest mainly to highly industrialised countries, such as renewable energy production, setting up energy grids and “green” chemistry, for example. However, these can be applied elsewhere through an approach of “convergence”. Even questions relating to fundamental research have crucial implications for planning out and implementing the ecological and social

transition programme. One example comes in the form of the disciplines of quantum physics and physics of the universe, which are on the verge of theoretical synthesis²³. In a similar fashion, molecular biology and neuroscience allow us access to a new way of understanding living entities and the biologically determining factors of human beings²⁴. Furthermore, of particular importance here is the fact that the notion of a solid which is isolated within a Euclidean space has now been replaced by the concept of a quantum “soup”, which allows for no vacuum and within which clusters of matter are simply lumps which are entirely independent of one another. In the future, science will centre around the complexity and interdependence that exists between all levels of energy relations, from the weakest to the strongest.

b. Transdisciplinary and encompasses all fields of knowledge

Thus, the most recent discoveries in physics and biology guide us towards epistemological models that make allusion to notions of interaction (with interaction loops that are retroactive on the quantum level) and complexity. They prove that the work of forerunners such as Edgar Morin was correct. From the 70s onwards, Edgar Morin worked on an entirely different level, social interactions, calling for a new form of complex thinking that would link together individual elements with the whole, thinking together and in a joint way regarding the social dynamics that the university discipline distinguishes and breaks up in an artificial way. Therefore, there is no longer a need to favour interdisciplinarity over mono-disciplinarity. It is, on the other hand, necessary to go beyond the disciplinary approach, gifting the scientific approach once again with the horizon of “thought”, which aims to act as an exercise of analysing the problems that arise across the board, in “everything”. In this sense, transdisciplinarity should be opted for over interdisciplinarity²⁵. Abandonning (inter)disciplinary expertise in order to produce works of transdisciplinary thought should be the main task of humanist researchers, who should endow all forms of scientific production with the characteristic of reflecting together upon the current problems of “civilisation”. In no way would a particular link with expertise or an act of delving into one specific scientific domaine exempt one from the task of thinking about the full set of possibilities in a complex universe, with parts that are profoundly interconnected. The figure of the humanist has to be

²³ On this point, the inspiring works of the physicist Carlo Rovelli, who gives an overview of the theoretical work currently taking place and their possible consequences.

²⁴ This recent research casts doubt upon the genetic superdetermination and the modelling of the human subject as a cybernetic “machine”. It is focused mainly on a model which bestows great importance on the fundamental indeterminacy of the human subject. This research in the field of biology and neuroscience links up with the conclusions of paleontology and etiology, which for centuries have for centuries attributed a central role to the notion of plasticity and “neoteny” (here, see for example André Leroi-Gourhan, *Le geste et la parole*, Paris : Albin Michel 1964). Philosophers have taken on these reflections, deducing from them a form of moral philosophy, which places the aptitude for cooperation and openness to the being (or rather, freedom), within a process of anthropological order, which has physical roots. On this point, see Peter Sloterdijk *Règles pour le parc humain*. Paris : Mille et une nuits, 2010. Today, these questions take on crucial importance within the framework of the debate which addresses the limits that we should impose on genetic manipulation techniques, particularly the gametes of the embryo. On this point, see Sylviane Agacinski, “le corps fabriqué” in *Le Débat*, n°159, March-April 2010.

²⁵ See Edgar Morin, “La stratégie de reliance pour l’intelligence de la complexité”, *Revue internationale de systémique*, vol 9, n°2, 1995.

restored. We should no longer set researchers and specialists apart from moralists or citizens. This need is called for from a historical point of view, as has always been the case during periods which precede great revolutions. This is the case because a great many different breakthroughs in different scientific domains must be brought together in a synthesis. The need which is called for exists because the epistemology of new science rediscovers, after an eclipse of three to four centuries, the potential scientific reach of defragmentation and once again ventures into holding together the whole and its parts conceptually: biology ties in with the notions of variability and singular events, for example, and is no longer content with recognising general rules and regular patterns in physical causality. This concern regarding the event²⁶ allows it to create an entirely unprecedented dialogue with “magical” or “wild”²⁷ thought systems which belong to traditional societies and which turn out to be extraordinarily fertile for reflecting upon the problems of viability. Agroecological research is a direct heir of this²⁸. It alludes to what could, in the future, be science of the living being.

A research and innovation policy focused on viability must not ignore any specific dimension of research simply because it belongs to a certain discipline or field (for example, fundamental research vs. applied research). In the same way, nor should it restrict itself to problems which appear to be directly pushed into the limelight by scientific ecology (the management of ecosystems and agroecology and the climate, for instance). It has a very broad reach.

One recent publication gives us an idea of the scope of current changes²⁹. From it, we can deduce the extreme diversity of the new knowledge required in order to support the transition: without doubt agroecology, but also energy, materials and chemistry (energy reconversion, transport and ecological habitats), the Transition economy (local currency systems, new regimes for assets and property, a new theory on value³⁰), industrial ecology and industries, communication theory and science, overhauling legal systems (nature rights, applying the UN protocol on ESCRs, the independence of legal authorities), integrative medicine, refounding the sociology of organisations and of the systems of governance (governance, ecological democracy), cooperative pedagogy, etc.

c. It includes civil society

By definition, this new research policy cannot be based around isolated researchers or laboratories. It must be collaborative and must spread the field of cooperation with research into civil society organisations and even to ordinary citizens. The digital revolution provides convenient support and new ways of organising knowledge, which are adapted to the challenges at hand. The fact that internet functions as a network means that it is admirably

²⁶ See Alain Badiou, *L'être et l'évènement*, Paris: Seuil 1988.

²⁷ Of course, with the meaning that Claude Lévi-Strauss gave to this term in *La pensée sauvage* (Paris: Plon 1965).

²⁸ On this point, see the analyses of Matthieu Calame in *Projet*, n°332, Février 2013.

²⁹ Lionel Astruc (ed.), *(R)évolutions. Pour une politique en actes*. Paris: Actes Sud, 2012.

³⁰ This issue echoes the work of Méda and Viveret on wealth indicators (see Dominique Méda : *Au-delà du PIB. Pour autre mesure de la richesse*. Paris : Flammarion 2008). The question of “value” and its link with money is also at the centre of the reflections of Stephen Green (*Valeurs sûres*, Paris: Parole et silence, 2010).

well-suited to scientific cooperation, which makes the distinction between a professional scientist and a non-scientist a hazy one, with everyone having to assume that someone in either position is sufficiently competent. The concept of demanding “excellence” is changing. It is no longer individual laboratories or researchers who will have their excellence acknowledged. Instead, the cooperation network will allow a large number of different aspects to be dealt with simultaneously in an efficient way, allowing for “complex” issues regarding a specific problem to be addressed. There is therefore a need to organise an immensely broad network of cooperators in order to deal with a certain research problem, ensuring that systems are available which deal with information efficiently enough so as to process a large amount of data and contextualise it within a network in accordance with the issue at hand, allowing for reflection on the question to be broadened even further afield. In certain fields, such as epidemiology or astronomy for instance, research networks already work in this way.

In a broad sense, it turns out that all of the challenges for such a transition are at the crossroads between so-called “experimental” sciences and social sciences. No scientific breakthrough in physics or biology and no industrial application could be part of the vision of a social and ecological transition unless it is supported by a deeply rooted reflection on the possibilities and ways in which social and institutional organisations could adapt to new ways of living, which are said to be “viable”. Here, research should move forward through a process of trial and error, with repetitive comings and goings between the social order and the natural order. Therefore, the experimental approach should be spread to the whole of the social order, considering everything, not only the single parts of the whole. An ambitious approach of this type seems to be entirely out of reach, unless of course systems for cooperation are put in place which are sufficiently broad and flexible, which also being well-structured, so as to effectively deal with the level of complexity.

In addition to researchers themselves, the key players in this new research policy, which aims to be a cooperative network, could be social mediators who in many cases belong to the voluntary sphere. The recent Alliance Sciences-Société manifesto, which was put together on the occasion of the Assises de l’Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche (Research and Further Education Assizes), places a particular emphasis on the central role played by the social and solidarity economy, which lies at the crossroads between the social dynamics and public policies of development: “the relationship economy and the jobs that are linked to it are rooted in the nerve endings of our societies. These jobs are increasingly highly skilled ones, and require widely distributed abilities and competencies that are highly refined. As a result of this, a large part of our future innovation capacities will not solely emerge from laboratories, whether they be public or private, and universities, but rather from the social corpus on the whole (forms of solidarity and local transitions, social housing and ways of living, forms of consumption, food professionals, luxury professionals, national cohesion and defence culture, health centres, relocalising public services, making justice local, etc).”³¹. These comments are addressed to French society, but can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to all societies.

A key aspect is the fact that cooperative research of this type would not be able to coexist with strategies for privatising knowledge, led by industrial groups which want to secure their position in international competition and gain control of technological innovation. The way in

which innovation centres are distributed is geopolitical issue of great importance. However, the digital revolution *flies in the face of this strategy at the same time as exacerbating it*. It allows anyone to take ownership of knowledge (patents, information, etc.), making it freely available for a large number of users. In accordance with this, capital needs to spread the digital sphere further, since the proliferation of capital is nowadays reliant upon the digital sphere. However, as it spreads further, this sphere makes any attempt to privatise knowledge and technological innovation more hypothetical and risky. Today, this fundamental contradiction is without doubt one of the main driving factors behind historical evolution. From this perspective, the computing revolution relaunches the historic cycle of emancipation movements which seek to liberate the individual from being subjugated to the interests of capital. André Gorz made a very powerful lever for creating autonomy from this. In his prophetic analyses, he foresaw the flourishing of computer piracy and the development of self-production³². It is precisely self-production of small elements that could today be the structural response to both deindustrialisation and the ecological conversion of industry³³.

3. A new theory of change, based on new impact indicators

- a. *The meta-structure (international economic order), that hinders a shift to viability must be changed*

Thus we are pushed to draft “viability” policy within the context of civilisation change, in which small social changes, evident at the local or national level, must tie in with overall global changes. Therefore, when measuring the efficacy of France’s actions from a viability standpoint, one must look above and beyond the local impact of change. Among others, France should use indicators which enable it to measure transformations in the global political and economic order. To this end, it should use indicators which, for example, enable it to measure the rate and speed of relocation of production and trade, which should be examined from the perspective of their long term viability (because this relocation

³¹ Press dossier of L’Alliance Science-Société, available online_

<http://www.lespetitsdebrouillardsbourgogne.org/Se%CC%81minaire-de-lancement-de-L.html>

³² André Gorz, *Ecologica*, Paris : Galilée, 2008.

³³ *Ibid.*

does not only stem from a downturn or “contraction” of global trade, but rather from reorientation of economic integration in terms of the long-term viability of production and trade).

Any measure aiming to enable regional poles to become development areas which enjoy political solidarity alongside autonomy (i.e. regional trade agreements, regional currencies, environmental international trading currencies), which is subject to an imperative of viability (i.e. the policies will be evaluated by elected officials and citizens, who analyse their long term “viability” in terms of social change), is helping to promote environmental and social equilibrium as a basis for stabilising international order.

France should help to set global ceilings for the use of non-renewable resources and for greenhouse gas emissions: “in order to create a sustainable economy, it is essential to clearly establish ceilings for resources and emissions and to clearly define objectives to lower said ceilings”³⁴. The British Global Commons Institute has created a “Contraction and Convergence” model. The model does not address carbon emissions, yet nevertheless, France could use it to draft its own proposals for international regulatory mechanisms which would encourage the global economy to move progressively towards global environmental and social convergence³⁵.

Without a shadow of a doubt this transition would demand that the world (particularly high-income countries and emerging nations) make considerable financial contributions to secure the necessary long term investment. Michel Griffon has generated an idea of the sums needed, for example, to fund an agroecological transition of global agriculture³⁶. Training a new generation of professionals capable of dealing with the complexity of the challenges posed by transition, and of effecting the technical and institutional changes required is a formidable task. Large-scale investment, particularly in energy, transport, and housing, would also be needed. However, stability mechanisms to reduce market fluctuations would also need to be implemented, in order to ensure that long term investments are cost effective.

Such a policy requires the release of budget surpluses for public projects, as well as control of financial sector activity, with a view to diverting liquidity currently used for speculative purposes to funding the transition. Draconian fiscal legislation, adopted if not at the European level (which of course would be desirable), then at least in France, could contribute to curtailing speculative activity, by depriving it of its primary financial resource. These measures could be accompanied by a reform of the ECB, allowing it to lend directly to states, cutting out the middleman of private banks: to a certain extent and under certain conditions, money creation could serve to fund the transition.

³⁴ Jackson 2010 : 173

³⁵ See Aubrey Meyer « Briefing : Contraction and convergence ». *Engineering Sustainability*, 157 (4), 189-192, and the link www.gci.org.uk/briefings/ICE.pdf.

³⁶ See Griffon. *Nourrir la planète*. Paris: Odile Jacob, 2008.

Indeed, a global renegotiation of European public debt (a renegotiation with undeniable legitimacy, given the mechanisms that have caused an exponential rise in the sum of these debts), would provide for debt levels to be significantly reduced from their current standing (the capital sum of French debt still outstanding does not exceed 30% of GDP, yet amounts to nearly 90% if interest is included: Thus the potential margin for reduction is considerable!), and would reinstate states' room for manoeuvre. These proposals are realistic; in order to be implemented all they need is strong political will from the President of the Republic, who would be supported by the vast majority of the social corpus.

In this regard, we should make use of liquidity currently held by large multinational companies in tax havens, which accounts for nearly 125 billion euros a year in tax revenue forgone for countries of the South³⁷. Moreover we should consider that the sums in question (amounting to some 800 billion euros a year), are not reinvested in the local economy and distort international accounting because they are taken away from revenue generated in a number of low-income countries³⁸.

Fiscal transparency and binding regulations would put an end to these abusive practices, thus releasing considerable sums which could be used to fund the transition. This is why from now on, companies should be legally responsible for the actions of their subsidiaries: This responsibility should be enshrined in international law, as well as in the objectives of the transition.

For example, in the protocol of human rights impact assessments, which forms part of the Ruggie Commission and was validated by the UN's Human Rights Council in 2011, indicators would need to be incorporated which allow us to evaluate the long term (economic and social) viability of investments, and their contribution to the transition (to what extent would these investments improve the economy's resilience? What kind of transformations would they induce in the local economic fabric? What would their impact be from a perspective of the dynamic of the transition, etc.).

Thus we are not lacking in resources. If it is true that our, global, approach far outreaches the limited capacity of public development aid³⁹, we could identify yardsticks which would ascertain France's contributions to international solidarity, within the framework of a global viability policy based on the one hand on strong alliances, and on the other on efforts to incite

³⁷ These figures are taken from reports of the Tax Justice Network. See also the report published by CCFD-Terre Solidaire (Jean Merckaert et alia, *L'économie déboussolée*, Paris : CCFD-Terre Solidaire, 2010).

³⁸ This is thanks to the "transfer price" system between the headquarters and branch of a multinational. In particular, this system allows multinational businesses to charge a "fee" on their branches' activities, and to perpetuate a strategy of economic dependence, despite the fact that the bulk of added value is produced in third countries. On this system, see Giraud and Renouard, *20 propositions pour réformer le capitalisme*, Paris: Champs Flammarion, 2011, Proposition 15. See also P. Dembinski, « Enjeux éthiques de prix de transfert », in A Mérieu (dir.), *Rapport moral sur l'argent dans le monde 2005*, Association d'Economie Financière, 2005, p. 238, cité par Giraud et Renouard, op. cit., p. 323.

³⁹ In this sense, Minister Canfin is entirely correct in considering that "counting up" the financial contribution to public development aid as a percentage of GDP is an inadequate indicator of the efforts that the government could permit itself in the name of "development" for low income countries.

the Eurozone and national economy itself to shift towards a green economy. These indicators should relate to resources, for example: The share of public expenditure earmarked for investment in the transition in France or abroad (within or outside the Eurozone), the share of capital investment reserved for companies of the social and solidarity economy who sign up to a “Charter of Transition” (France, Europe, outside Europe), the existence or absence of a “viability” strategy, in development agencies’ programming documents and in bilateral cooperation agreements, as well as the number of agreements reached which explicitly advocate such a strategy, the efforts made to research these issues, the number and intensity of actions carried out in partnership with civil society in the North and the South which contribute to the transition, etc..

With regard to the impact of these actions, we would need, for example, to evaluate their contribution to making both individuals and the collective as a whole flourish: Expectancy of life in good health, level of education, but also confidence, communities’ resilience, “social skills”⁴⁰ (i.e. the actual possibility for individuals to have a social life), etc. This evaluation would require using concrete measurements or projects, to extrapolate broader developments they might effect, and what would result from a point of view of individual and collective skills, and for the overall viability of social evolution⁴¹.

Nonetheless, it is undeniable that a European social and environmental transition independent of all public development aid would mitigate the infamous “natural resource curse”⁴², suffered by low-income countries. It would do so by alleviating the pressure exerted by industrialised and emerging nations on low-income countries in order to obtain the resources they need to fuel their growth.

If the current trend persists, this pressure will continue to grow in the coming decades and remain a major cause of instability for the latter : political and social order are severely disrupted each time a new mineral deposit, or new oil reserves are discovered under a country’s land or seabed.

b. Mentalities must be changed in order for homo viabilis⁴³ to emerge

Nevertheless, the immense task of changing the meta-structure will not be enough to ensure that humanity can break through the threshold of becoming a viability-focused civilisation. Viability involves a conversion to a new form of ethics in which the passion for solidarity unites with a new way of envisaging the relationships between humankind and nature.

⁴⁰ We borrow the term work capabilities from Amartya Sen. However, we add a collective dimension to it which is absent from the works of Sen. On this debate, see *Projet*, n°306, and note 49.

⁴¹ This extrapolation approach is entirely central since it allows all individual initiatives to be included in an scientific production approach/validation of hypotheses, and for viability models to be built. It is in this extrapolation exercise and return to experience that the method of “complex” transdisciplinarity is forged.

⁴² See Sachs, J.D. and Warner, A. M, « Natural Resource Abundance And Economic Growth”. *National Bureau of Economic research*, Working paper No. 5398, Cambridge, MA: 1995, révisé 1997. See also Sachs, J.D. and Warner, A. M. “The Curse Of Natural Resources”, *European Economic Review*, Vol. 45, 2001, p. 827-838.

⁴³ We borrow this expression from Michel Griffon (« Homo viabilis », in *Ceras-Projet*, N°317, 2010).

One major hindrance in the transition towards this new set of ethics is the tendency for individuals and cultures to remain prisoners of alienation strategies, which shut them off into isolated spheres and prevent them from having a broader outlook on their actions, both from a universal perspective and from an individual perspective at one and the same time. The origins of this alienation differ depending on the society that one belongs to. On the one hand, industrialised societies have undergone rigorous reorganisation since the beginning of the nineteenth century as a result of the need to circulate and accumulate capital, which was ultimately to impose itself upon the social order in question. On the other hand, other societies are relatively independent from the “market”, meaning that they do not subject the way in which society is organised to the market. With industrialised societies, the alienation stems from the fact that individuals become pure functions which are subject to the interests of capital. This capital dictates consumption patterns, working regimes and even the way space is used. With regards to the latter society setup, alienation principally is a result of the fact that individuals are inserted into a fully-fledged network of allegiances based around one’s family, region, ethnicity, corporation, etc. These are exclusive groups that significantly restrain their behaviour and their choices. The viability ethic finds its niche in this tension between individual universes, which need to be acknowledged, and a “universal universe”, which would oversee them all. This would follow on from the universal precepts of moral law, the clearest manifestation of which is the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and a constant extrapolation exercise, which would allow a distinction to be drawn up between what can be applied across the board in terms of individual practices from what cannot. This is applicable on a moral level and also in terms of the different levels of “viability”: extending the sphere of what is universal is to be accompanied by the slow creation of a “common” world⁴⁴: which activities and which ways of enhancing resources could be spread across the globe without endangering the viability of human society, considered as one?

This tension calls upon us to redesign the sphere of the individual in order to make it compatible with the demands of what is universal and what is “common”. For our own societies or those of emerging countries, this means deeply reforming the way in which the capitalist economy functions, making it compatible with the demands for a “transition”, following the terms of a renewed “new deal”, which would see classic businesses coexisting with social and solidarity economy companies, on the condition that conventional businesses accept the constraints that the latter choose to include in their ways of working (internal democracy, social usefulness, ecology, etc.), while also showing openness to the immense fiscal reform that would be necessary to give a new direction to the added value of the system

⁴⁴ It is only then that we can speak about “common goods”. These may as well not exist for as long as individuals, mired in their spheres of individuality, refuse to consider that they have something in “common” with others. In order for people to see aspects as “shared” with “others”, it is clear that firstly they need to recognise universal rights as subjects, but they also need to think about what this community would imply in terms of the coexistence of lifestyles, which have to be the proof of their viability. In other words, the economic notion of “common good” requires an international political community to be built. On this point see Jean Gadrey, « des biens publics au biens communs » (<http://alternatives-economiques.fr/blogs/gadrey/2012/04/24/des-biens-publics-aux-biens-communs/>).

⁴⁵ Regarding this renewed New Deal, see Arnspurger ARNSPERGER, Christian, «Transitions écologique et transition économique: quels fondements pour la pensée? Quelles tâches pour l'action? », 2010 www.uclouvain.be/.../Arnspurger.TRANSITION.12.02.2010.pdf

of production, focusing it on investments for the future⁴⁵. This policy should be dictated by the need to grant a form of local “autonomy” to citizens regarding their alienation, while promising them that their working energies will be invested in local businesses, which need help in order to flourish and which will be based in regions which the companies will help to preserve⁴⁶. This reform must be accompanied by firm action aiming to stimulate the work of associations and cooperations while encouraging citizens to take part in public debate. There is a huge number of citizen initiatives but they are not perceived as the springboard for making French production dynamic again, and this is the case both for citizens and public authorities. These “oases”⁴⁷ of cooperation must be encouraged and supported by public action: they must be seen as the green shoots of tomorrow’s businesses, which are hard-wearing and supported by a global project which aims to make the French economy more ecological. In emerging countries, initiatives of this type must be bolstered and included at the core of cooperation programmes which aim to spread their influence and reach.

Furthermore, France should encourage low-income countries to reconsider their development practices (governance and democracy, industrialisation, access to essential services, demographics, etc.) through the lens of global viability. This involves making use of indicators that aim to measure both the visible results of a particular investment (number of beneficiaries with access to water or health services, for instance) and the way in which the underlying problem has been dealt with (why is it that the local population has had no access to water up until now? How did they organise themselves during periods of water shortage?). A number of deep, underlying transformations have been started. For example, the way in which the issue of water has highlighted the unequal distribution of decision making among traditional chieftains or members of a particular kinship group has allowed for a structural transformation in the relationship to lineage and traditional authority to be introduced while also decompartmentalising local identities. In this way, a space has opened up in which the problem of what is “common” can be addressed and set upon the horizon of the intelligibility of viability. There is therefore a need to adopt a complex “double trigger” approach in the area of impact. We should not settle for measuring visible changes, but to the contrary should penetrate into the universe of underlying meaning, which provides structure to the social order, determining individual behaviour⁴⁸. In this way, we will penetrate into the essential question of factors determining subjectivity: without modern subjects there is no form of political modernity possible. Viability is a way of going deeper into the project of modernity: without *homo viabilis* viability is simply not possible.

⁴⁶ On the question of autonomy, see Gorz, *op. cit.*. Agroecology is an incredibly stimulating framework for thinking about the problem of autonomy (see Ricard Lanata, « Le noyau dur d’une alternative au capitalisme », in *Projet*, Janvier 2013).

⁴⁷ Here we refer to the “Oasis everywhere” movement founded by Pierre Rabhi.

⁴⁸ Regarding this impact approach which is key for CCFD and several other development NGOs, one should look at the document *Comment apporter le changement*, by visiting this website: <http://www.cidse.org/content/publications/rethinking-development/development-effectiveness-and-impact/how-to-bring-about-change.html>. See also De Leener et al. *Changement social et politique. Eléments pour la pensée et l’action*. Dakar: Enda Graf Sahel, 2005, 287p.

c. A set of indicators to be invented

These reflections can crystallise and become incredibly political when it comes to the battle on indicators which will undoubtedly ensue during the international negotiation of the Millennium Goals, or “Sustainable Development Goals”, which are set to replace the MDGs in the post 2015 period. Governments will put together a theoretical corpus in order to outline their positions with considerable support from scientific experts: to this end, the United States has already announced the creation of a President’s Global Development Council, which will bring together international experts.

Of course, France must take part in this battle with one clear ambition: ensuring that the United Nations adopts a set of measures for “development” which are part of the global political framework of transition. The essential “contraction and convergence” of the world economy, moving towards a situation of viable balance, must be a key element of the creation of international goals for development and the indicators that are linked to them.

Among these indicators, France can particularly insist upon the Economy Relocalisation Rate (which would measure both the state of play and the process), which proposing a Resilience Index (rating the vulnerability of societies and the natural environment to external shocks) and an Index of Social and Ecological Viability (which would allow an economy to be gauged in accordance with the degree to which an economy is compatible with ecological reproduction cycles while focusing on capacity-building for its members⁴⁹). When applied to public or private investments, this approach can, for instance, help us to measure the marginal contribution of a certain investment to social viability (or even the elasticity of social viability in accordance with the investment in question)⁵⁰. The same can be said regarding the ecological “viability” of investments. Indicators of this type could become part of the evaluation tables used by international agencies and development banks when putting forward dossiers requesting loans or subsidies. In the same way, France could propose measuring the ecological intensity of economies⁵¹, rendering this intensity level a goal for international action.

⁴⁹ See note 38. This index could go further than the Human Development Index put together by the UNDP, and would go beyond certain limits in the capabilities approach of Amartya Sen, by studying in particular this notion of collective capabilities. On these questions, see Gaël Giraud et Jean-Luc Dubois, « L'économie d'« acteurs capables » », Ceras - revue *Projet* n°306, September 2008. URL : <http://www.ceras-projet.com/index.php?id=3279>. See also Cécile Renouard and Jean-Luc Dubois, « Une approche à poursuivre... et à dépasser », Ceras - revue *Projet* n°306, Septembre 2008. URL : <http://www.ceras-projet.com/index.php?id=3279>.

⁵⁰ Such an approach was described by Ricard Lanata, « Pour une approche sociétale et politique du développement », AFD, document de travail n°70, September 2008.

⁵¹ Ecological intensity is not entirely the same thing as ecological viability, in the sense that an intensely ecological economy would not be happy to guarantee the reproduction of ecosystem cycles, but would create positive feedback loops which would improve the global effectiveness of the ecosystem (increasing intra and interspecific diversity and global resilience, etc.).

4. A new international diplomacy, the cornerstone for coherence in public policy in the field of development

a. Civil society's gamble

This global action from France must be part of a new geostrategic doctrine and a new form of diplomacy. Some elements of this new doctrine have already been addressed in the first part of this note. The interests of France in perpetuating its culture and sovereignty mean that its development plans have to be made to be viable. Our country will not leave the current crisis unless it radically calls into question its model of development and growth: transition must be set as the objective on the horizon for national public policy, but also for French diplomacy.

In particular, this requires a break with European policy, which up until now has favoured the consensus of the 27 and its alliance with Germany. Putting a transition programme in place will require huge investment and vigorous coordination, bringing together public authorities, companies and civil society organisations. A programme of this type would clearly benefit from being led at a European level. However, we should not prevent ourselves from stepping back from our current alliances if it transpires that we must push this movement forward alone. In order to recover budgetary leeway, incredibly radical measures come to the fore: progressive taxing on incomes from work and capital, reaching confiscatory thresholds (the current government is starting to give signs that it is working in this direction), putting in place controls on capital flows and currency once again, cancelling a part of French public debt (for example, the part which corresponds to the interest of this debt, which can rightly be considered illegitimate), monetising a part of these same debts (which would require a reform of the European system of central banks), a cap on the gaps between incomes (the calculation of which would include salaries and multiple bonuses, but also income from inheritance), and others. Very concrete proposals which follow these lines have already been put together by the foremost economists and intellectuals⁵². There is no real reason why France should not withdraw from the system of restrictions which up until now have opposed the country and prevented it from undertaking a “civilisational” leap, which is required as a result of the circumstances.

However, we must start by envisaging such a policy of “breaking clean” through the lens of the potential alliances that would progressively be created, thus strengthening the French initiative, and which would give it a long-term reach. A certain degree of unilateralism in French foreign policy must be interpreted not as a step backwards, but as a call for new forms of international cooperation, for a new “globality”, which would make its mantra that of stabilising the global economy around a global civilisation of viability. This is therefore an invitation towards new forms of solidarity and international cooperation, which strive to make trade relocalised while respecting the particular aspects of local areas, encompassing them all within the aim of global shared responsibility. This is where the “civil society gamble” takes on its full meaning. A French policy which is ambitious in terms of an ecological and social

⁵² See in particular Gaël Giraud and Cécile Renouard, *Le facteur 12, op. cit* ; Emmanuel Todd, *Après la démocratie* (Paris : Gallimard 2008). See also the manifesto of the économistes atterrés.

transition would doubtlessly rally to our cause a large part of public opinion (the “middle class” which are said to have a central role lying ahead of them in future years). If we are to start with European public opinion we see that the “Southern” alliance which François Hollande has started could be widened if France made itself the herald of people’s sovereignty against the interests of an elite which is compromised with the financial markets, with the condition, nevertheless, that the sovereignty which is regained is part of the framework of a transition towards the general interest. European civil society could be led towards supporting French positions if it recognised in it an echo of their own demands. Despite the crisis, which drags a certain sector of the electorate to draw back on themselves in a strictly nationalistic manner, the growing internationalisation of opinion should not be underestimated: any policy which would bestow individuals with a part of their political autonomy once again in the name of stronger collective security (a greater level of “resilience” from national and territorial economies in the face of external shocks”), and which would intensify diplomatic action in favour of another form of “globality”, would receive the votes of the majority.

b. A transition diplomacy

Such diplomacy should aim to ensure that France has a network of supplies and strategic opportunities, coupled with stable, long term alliances, that will enable the allies to achieve convergence. Therefore, it consists in focusing on a real "partnership", which does not ignore the well known interest of the parties, but that would require France to forego a certain number of "comparative advantages" (based on its technological know-how) for the benefit of its long term security. Such a proposal, whilst it may seem dangerous, is in the end a lot less risky than surrendering large swathes of our industrial know-how (in the aerospace and nuclear sectors, for example) against equipment purchase contracts without any real political counterpart. Although there must be technology transfer, and financial resources, they should be based on a shared goal of convergence around a global "post-transitional" society, which, through international cooperation, could have as its goal a new and viable state- a factor of collective security.

Rather than promoting the use of the "France website" to attract foreign investors (who, for some reason, could compensate for weak domestic investment), it would be necessary, by means of very stringent regulatory and fiscal measures (a new "transition" deal), to redirect national capital (private or public) towards the transitional investments in the hexagon, and to use a portion of these resources in order to enter into agreements with international partners with which we would fund development actions for the purpose of a mutual interest in long term "sustainability". France could adopt a diplomacy with the aim of persuading the European Union to sign agreements of this type (far removed from the economic partnership agreements, whose rationale is strictly free trade) with developing world regions (ECOWAS, MERCOSUR, SADC), for example. These agreements would be based on the principle of financial and knowledge transfers (technology and industrial know-how, social engineering) as well as on cooperation programs (transition research) in exchange for a program of ecological and social transition that partners commit themselves to implementing. The Yasuni project in

Ecuador, despite its ambitions having been drastically reduced in view of the challenges it faces, prefigures such agreements. The funds established for partners interested in the project (in particular Denmark and Sweden) have been deposited in an account *in trust*. The project governance ensures these partners have a say in what actions are carried out. All of this guarantees transparency and enables the joint evaluation of the effectiveness of the mechanism, in light of the challenges before it. In the event of a failure to obtain the EU's commitment to this path, France will have to try and act unilaterally.

c. An ad hoc architecture: an Institute of Ecological and Social Transition.

To coordinate France's transition actions at both the national and international levels, the government would benefit from the creation of an Institute of Ecological and Social Transition. This institute would be the "college" under which the different spaces of existing or future cooperation would reside, bringing together government and non-state actors (companies, trade unions, local authorities, NGOs) around public policy issues falling within the scope of ecological and social transition.

The Institute's first responsibility would be to capitalise on the innovative experiments that take place in France or abroad, from which the overall transition policy could draw its inspiration. From these actions one could draw some syntheses: the modelling of a large-scale transition economy, impact indicators, etc.. Based on these, and a comprehensive reading of the Transition conditions that it could produce in conjunction with other specialised institutes (IDDRI, IFRI, IRIS, Centre for strategic foresight, etc.), the Institute could prepare recommendations for public policies of the ecological and social transition, in particular with regard to regulatory instruments to ensure consistency between the different areas of public action: the objectives of sustainable development, the regulation of international trade, investment, the banking sector (in particular speculative finance and the ECB), regulation of companies (size, governance, pension accounting, working time, etc..) regulatory and tax protection of Transition activities in France, etc ...

The different spaces of existing cooperation could thus propose to debate in the Institute all their proposals or analyses concerning sector or thematic area difficulties, wherever their specialism may lie, as long as it be linked to the cross-cutting issue of ecological and social transition. The Institute would then decide whether to act on these proposals and organise, where appropriate, the transversal debate, in order to later retain the key elements that could contribute towards a policy framework. On the other hand, the Institute could ask the cooperation spaces to take up a particular issue which it considers to be important in view of its remit, in order to clarify specific issues. Again, the spaces for cooperation, which have control over their own agenda, could decide whether they are able to respond to the demands of the Institute, or not. Such an arrangement would ensure that each "space" has relative autonomy vis-à-vis the Institute.

The convergence of objectives and priorities between "spaces" of existing cooperation and the Institute would be enabled due to the mode of governance of the latter. We propose that the

Institute have the status of an independent agency, whose Board of Directors would bring together government and civil society (including businesses), by subordinating all actions to a clear political objective. In other words, the different actors could make their contributions, provided they fall within the guidelines of the ecological and social transition to a sustainable society, which would be laid down in statutes to be endorsed by all parties. This does not preclude the setting up, within the Institute, of Colleges of "contributors / participants." The Institute would have a permanent group of researchers engaged with the dynamics of a social movement and connected to other research laboratories ⁵³ would prepare, taken from each other's proposals, the syntheses and proposals which could be debated within the cooperation space thereby created. This space would enable, beyond agreements that may be found in any particular subject, following this or that short-term issue (common positions during international conferences and negotiations, for example), the development of a shared vision of general interest. Some key questions could be raised: can we reconcile the ideas of social progress and equilibrium ? Which economic sectors can grow? Which must decrease in size? What are the drivers of social change today? How can we construct the ecological and social transition strategies that will win over the middle classes ? Etc.

The Institute of ecological and social transition would be placed under the authority of the Prime Minister and would benefit from, due to its status, autonomy vis-a-vis its guardian, which would have, nevertheless, a right of first referral. The other members would also enjoy a right of referral. This Institute would allow the government to give a strong political signal by showing its ambitious and realistic commitment to ecological and social transition, both for France and internationally, and to reconciling the constraints of short term strategy with that of the indispensable long term strategy. The work of the Institute would contribute to better identifying the conditions of future policy changes. These would enable, at the highest levels of government and within civil society, some convergences to gradually take place that are essential to our country and the world, which for the first time in its history is faced with the very real risk of global collapse⁵⁴. The workspace that we propose to create must adhere to "the sacred efforts of birth" of a new world.

⁵³ These research laboratories can be public or non-governmental. We could cite for example, the laboratory of Tim Jackson at the university of Sussex (United Kingdom), or that of Christian Arnsperger at the University of Louvain la neuve (Belgium), or also that of Jean Gadrey at the university of Lille. Laboratories in these regions that sign Transition Partnership Agreements with France or the European Union could join in with this form of collaboration.

⁵⁴ Stéphane Foucart, « Notre civilisation pourrait-elle s'effondrer ? Personne ne veut y croire », *Le Monde*, 9 February 2013.