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Ref: Globally Local Network

### CONTENTION

We face the triple whammy of CLIMATE CHANGE; RESOURCE DEPLETION; and POPULATION PRESSURE, resulting in irreversible degradation of the biosphere. Our contention is that without a concerted and co-ordinated response both the older established post-industrial societies, and the rapidly developing economies, could begin to collapse within three to four decades. By mid century we shall have added another 3 billion to world population, whilst the Stern Review suggests that the world economy will have expanded 3 to 4 fold - on the basis of existing finite resources. We contend that this expansion is physically impossible to achieve, a position which is well documented, and is almost daily reinforced by mounting evidence of severe strain on both the natural world and on human societies.

### RESPONSE

Across the globe individuals, organisations, businesses and local societies (generally independently of local or central government) , are responding by embarking on change and innovation, designed in the main to reduce CO2 emissions, and alter dependence on traditional energy supplies. The intended outcomes are adaptation to and mitigation of the effects of Climate Change.

### APPRAISAL

The extent of this groundswell movement is unknown, but anecdotally is probably greater than might seem from media reporting and political responses. HOWEVER, there are a number of critical omissions in this otherwise promising scenario. The second and third factors in the above contention are rarely acknowledged; and there is little sign of any cohesion or over-arching strategy in terms of SAFEGUARDING AND REINFORCING these positive and welcome changes. Once the pressure is on, governments beat a rapid retreat from their "green" agendas in favour of "business as usual".

### CONSEQUENCES

In the absence of a resilient and cohesive strategy designed to hold societies and communities together AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, and provide them with workable and understandable infra-structures, there could be a general collapse of the global economy, and even of nation states. We may not favour the Hollywood scenario of descent into apocalyptic mayhem - attractive though it be to some! - yet there are unfortunately too many examples of societies collapsing under pressure to adopt a sanguine view of Consequences. In any case, the precautionary principal should apply.

### "GLOBALLY LOCAL" RESPONSE

Faith in the power of new technology and alternative energy sources is little better than a 'fingers crossed' approach - or should that be 'finger in the dyke'? (see Paul Mobbs "Energy Beyond Oil") There do exist a number of attempts at developing this 'resilient and cohesive strategy'. For example Richard Heinberg's "Powerdown" promotes the concept of social and economic "lifeboats", but is not developed as a working strategy.

Essentially, we need a clear understanding of each society's essential economic requirements, and of those mechanisms which assist societies in maintaining cohesion in the face of multiple threats.

*continued*

## **REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY.**

Globally Local focuses on the GEOGRAPHIC REGION to provide the basic cohesive elements. It may be helpful also to consider the cultural and social dynamics, as well as geographic factors which have led some, such as the Basques; the Kurds; to bid for regional freedom in the face of nation state opposition. This could equally apply to the former tribal structures of, for example, West Africa which may prove to be more resilient than some European imposed national boundaries.

“Devolve!” in their campaign for English devolution, refer to “functional regions”, the emphasis being on the social, cultural, and political elements which lead to cohesion. Their regions are not far removed from those which Globally Local identifies. This encourages us to think that the concept of

### **“COLLABORATIVE FUNCTIONAL REGIONS”**

is a viable one.

When the majority of societies eventually come under pressure from the triple whammy of CLIMATE CHANGE; RESOURCE DEPLETION; POPULATION PRESSURE; survival will depend upon resilient, culturally acceptable, and manageable, interlinked regionally based infrastructures.

Each region will require two elements -

- a) a workable strategy for identifying and safeguarding basic resources, to include:-  
Water; Food: Energy: Shelter; Transport
- b) social cohesion based on national, cultural, linguistic as well as geographic/economic factors.

Very few identified regions will be self sufficient even in the basic necessities, and therefore TRADE based on NEED and REGIONAL DIVERSITY will be essential to avoid major conflict.

## **STARTING POINTS**

- development of a METHODOLOGY for the identification of cohesive human/geographical regions; in collaboration with other bodies world-wide; and the testing of the concept by the study of a selection of contrasting regions (see GLOBALLY LOCAL flyer for suggested list);
- RESEARCH\* into the long term viability of these regions on the basis of:-  
current activity, and the degree of self sufficiency in basic resources (see above);  
potential for short to medium term restructuring;  
and their requirements in terms of inter-regional TRADE. to achieve viability.
- TRIALS \*\* and appraisal of a range of initiatives in:-  
producing and processing locally - foodstuffs and other goods;  
new materials and technologies - for example through OPL's materials division;  
inter-regional technology exchanges as pioneered by NCTX in Japan.
- AWARENESS RAISING AND EDUCATION  
local government, agency and media adopting their true role of enabling, funding and promoting appropriate change and awareness of local initiatives.

## **\* THE FOOD PROJECT**

Globally Local is presently working with West Midlands Foodlinks, and Arthur Brett Catering, to bring more local food into the city schools and restaurants. We have already tested the market with a number of products and restaurants. Research is required into total food requirements and other potential regional production including allotments and gardens. (contrast Cuba and Haiti)

## **\*\* ECO PRODUCTS**

Two products are now being investigated:-

- a) from the global network - CORK - a sustainable natural product whose total ecology is under threat; cork fabric is a versatile product used very successfully in fashion accessories.
- b) Research and Development into Urban Earth's new pressure based composite (working title “JAZ”), which is 100% recycled paper, has been undertaken in Birmingham. Products include works of art, as well as desk top furniture. Investment is required in commercial scale production and marketing.