



New Paradigm in Human Development: A Progress Report

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The current socio-economic-political paradigm is destroying our most precious capital – natural, human and social. The current paradigm is non-sustainable. It has to be changed! The required paradigmatic change will have to be one of the most dramatic in the history of humankind, comparable to or even more profound than the agricultural, commercial, democratic, and industrial revolutions of the past.

Recent WAAS conferences at the United Nations in Geneva and Library of Alexandria in June 2013 and at round tables in Washington DC and Ottawa this September have advanced the Academy's systematic exploration of the need and potential for the emergence of a radically new global paradigm of human development.

A clear understanding of the past and present constitutes essential foundations for knowledge of the future. Therefore, considerable attention has been focused on radical social changes that have occurred in the past, such as the unprecedented transitions in society and politics marked by the New Deal in the 1930s, the founding of the UN after World War II, the end of the Cold War, and the progressive emergence and expansion of the European Union. Our study includes an investigation of the forces that compelled these transitions and the circumstances that precipitated them. These turning points show that radical changes can and do occur, often suddenly and with surprising swiftness.

Equal importance is being placed on trying to more fully comprehend the characteristics of the present paradigm, including the intellectual premises on which it is based, the social institutions through which it acts, the entrenched values that support its continued existence, and the fundamental flaws that compel its eventual demise. The Academy's meetings are exploring fatal weaknesses in the present system, including flawed concepts such as unlimited national sovereignty and competitive security; flawed institutions such as unregulated financial markets and governance by plutocracy; and flawed policies that support destabilizing speculation, ever widening inequalities and ecological destruction at the expense of full employment, human security and sustainable development.

Radical change can only be effected by irresistible forces of social evolution that will not be denied. Therefore, the Academy also seeks to identify the deep drivers that are active

today beneath the surface emanating weak signals of more powerful tumultuous future events. These drivers include intellectual changes such as the growing understanding of the role of complexity and uncertainty; technological forces revolutionizing communications, education and the media; the persistent force exerted by the claim of human rights and social justice; the forces of democratization; demographic forces that are shifting the epicenter of global society; rising levels of unemployment in the West combined with rising levels of prosperity in the developing world; the emerging global Middle Class and the frustrated expectations of those that have been left behind; and ecological warning signs that refuse to disappear and will not be ignored.

Our endeavor to formulate a new paradigm draws substantially on earlier activities of the Academy. Recent WAAS programing on individuality, limits to rationality, employment, new economic theory, international security, global rule of law and human capital coalesce in the realization of the need and outlines a new human-centered social, economic, political paradigm designed to enhance human and social capital and preserve the richness and diversity of our natural capital.

This creative exercise to envision alternative pathways for human development also involves an examination of new concepts such as a more comprehensive notion of human security; of financial and economic institutions rededicated to their original purpose of promoting human welfare rather than fostering rising levels of insecurity, inequality and unsustainable exploitation of the natural environment; of political institutions of global governance responding to and reflecting the collective will of humanity as a whole; and of social institutions capable of delivering quality education and healthcare to all people everywhere.

Envisioning a new paradigm is an act of creative imagination. The effort initiated by the Academy is far from complete. But our early explorations have convinced us that viable solutions do exist for the pressing problems confronting humanity today, provided we have the courage to ask challenging questions and the willingness to entertain new approaches. Creativity is required to define and develop and imagination is required to formulate the new paradigm and to formulate effective strategies for realizing it in practice.

Our endeavor is based on the premise, indeed the deep conviction, that the human being is the source of unlimited creative potential and that the present paradigm falls far short of fully developing the potential of its members. Solutions exist because unutilized human potential exists in abundance waiting to be developed and released. There must be and is a better way. History compels us to seek to find it. Humanity's remarkable achievements in the past give us confidence that we are capable of fashioning a better future.

This endeavor to define, develop and formulate a new paradigm demands, on one side, research, education and creativity and, on the other side, an integrated activity by a network of committed global organizations. Therefore, parallel to its intellectual effort, the Academy is seeking to establish an umbrella group in which several global organizations can work together to envision and promote a new and better paradigm for all humanity.