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*JUNE 5TH—WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL DAY
OUR CALL: PAY FORWARD
BY MARTA BENAVIDES*



Today, given the very negative conditions of the World and the Planet, it is urgent to see and understand that the various crisis being faced by humanity and planet are deep, dangerous, urgent and very difficult. These crisis – climate, food, energy and the financial/economic, not necessarily in order of priority-affect and impat on each other and demand immediate and intentional attention. The global social, political and environmental environments are in such condition that put the quality of life and life itself in the planet in danger.. life in the planet is in peril.. it is not then that the planet, the Pachamama as we call the planet in the continent of the Americas, is in PERIL.. this is important and critical to understand, as we proceed to respond to what are the urgent needs we face as humans. The planet can not be saved by our actions, in these

crisis, but effective action about transforming them, can save the possibility of life for humans in the planet. And this must be the priority.

What is then the call in order to have the care of the Planet for the care of all present and future generations of humanity: Our call: PAY FORWARD..

What does that mean?: to make sure that all actions formal and informal, official and not, must be about that. It means that we must not wait until there are financial/economic, the food, the energy, and the climate, crisis to resolve and take measures to make do. No. But it means that the economic and financial measures must be to correct the inequalities that create impoverishment which result in lack of education, decent and dignified jobs, food, water, accessible health and housing for all, transportation, recreation, etc. It means that it must be a priority the creation of the conditions for the fulfilment of all human rights, and the social, economic and cultural rights of peoples (the collec-

tive rights), and to assure a healthy environment and peaceful planet. This is what sustainability is about. Thus, this is what real development and real security is about.

Our call demands that we live in the practice of the precautionary principle, that is, that unless there is certainty that life and planet will not be damaged, no action will proceed, thus honoring life first. Thus, education is for the purpose of creating global citizens that impact from the local to the global level for the well being of all, and for the care of the global common goods. This citizenry, must understand that the people are the state and the government, who must accompany in the most effective ways the administration of government, that is the work of public servants at all levels, only then there would not be permits being issued to businesses such as British Petroleum and its partners, to dig the deepest well in search of oil by 2020 in the Arctic, or the control of seeds by four big transnationals, as they also make them into genetically modified seeds, or the commercialization of water, or the grabbing of land from the original inhabitants for the planting of biofuels, or an education that is not for the real development of persons, there would not be the cruel reality of the 1% of peoples having what billions of people, about half of humanity, hold to meet their humans needs; or a company such as Apple holding more than 300 billion dollars as a reserve for a rainy day. WE MUST MAKE SURE WE ARE COMMITTED TO PAY FORWARD.. AND THE TIME IS NOW..

The United Nations has been assessing today the state of the commitment for the Millennium Development Goals—MDGs, the 2015 Development Agenda.. up to September 2015.. and it has found that much still has to be done, that women, rural peoples, youth, and many other sectors such as first nations, older peoples, peoples with special needs, have again not been included.. so they are rendered into conditions of vulnerability, of marginalization, of impoverishment, thus rendered voiceless.. The lack of inclusion of the need for peace, and for the health of the environment, and climate change has surfaced as goals that are a priority. There is now the recognition of the urgent need to change this reality.. efforts are being made to see to that as the New Development Agenda Post 2015, as the Sustainable Development Goals-SDGs are being created, they must result from the negotiation of Sept 2014 to Sept 2015..and for this to happen it is important that all governments and all peoples must get involved at all levels of the processes.

In these UN processes it has become clear for civil society, that it is urgent and greatly needed, to create effective mechanisms and offices that would guarantee the timely accompaniment of civil society of all these UN decisions making processes, for the good of humans and the care of the planet.

This work affirms that it is urgent also that the inequalities and what is at the root cause of inequalities be effectively addressed. To move effectively for the SDGs the situations mentioned must work as a priority as Social Watch has stated on consumption and production patterns :

“Joint civil society action around Post-2015 has to focus on goals and commitments for the countries of the North, the necessary changes of the consumption and production patterns in these countries, and the structural framework conditions shaped by these countries, particularly in the global financial, investment and trade systems”.

This is possible, here are suggested indicators to measure the effectiveness of such work, they were presented Feb 2014 to the UN by the Women Major Group and the Women Post 2015 Coalition:

Secure Safe and Sustainable and Just Production and Consumption Patterns and eliminate hazardous substances and technologies

- Guarantee (100%) application of the precautionary principle¹ and the polluter pays principle the policies and programs on sustainable production and consumption and to new and existing technologies, products and waste management processes.
- Ensure full application of prior free and informed consent: Indigenous and local knowledge systems and technologies are adequately recognized, protected, strengthened and used ensuring control by the indigenous communities. Women and other affected groups participate effectively in decision-making throughout all stages of technology development, including assessment

- Eliminate (100%) hazardous substances: Phase out harmful substances and chemicals and radioactive substances linked with persistent and/or irreversible damage to humans and the environment

- Harmful chemicals: hazardous pesticides, endocrine disrupting chemicals, CMRs, PB...etc

- Harmful substances including mercury, lead, arsenic, cadmium, asbestos in products and processes

Radioactive substances

- Eliminate (100%) all unsustainable tax incentives: Tax exemptions, subsidies, regulatory frameworks and other incentives are redirected towards sustainable, knowledge and employment-intensive sectors and local sustainable value chains and away from unsustainable activities, including industrial fisheries, forestry and agriculture, risky and otherwise unsustainable forms of energy production like fossil fuels, nuclear energy, unconventional energy production/fracking and industrial bioenergy, extractive industries and chemical industry

- 100% Internalization of environmental costs for the full life-cycle of products; this includes full insurance costs for greatest expectable accidents in case of high-risk technologies. Currently, nuclear power operators and many other high-risk industrial complexes, are exempted from insurance obligations, which means that in case of accidents, the tax-payer/ citizens end up paying for the damage.

- Full environmental and social corporate reporting and accountability. Set binding criteria that industrial production and consumption practices, especially extractive industries, do not cause violence, toxic pollution, displacement, poverty, resource scarcity, gender disparity, or environmental degradation.

- Enact corporate social accountability standards are put in place to enforce decent labor conditions and prevent overuse and overproduction of resources and pollution by investors and corporations.

- Ensure access to environmentally sound technologies, developing countries have equitable access to technologies, agreement on lifting of intellectual property barriers and measures to ensure that knowledge is in the public domain.

- Full technology assessment and authorization: Ensure independent social and environmental impact assessments to monitor and evaluate new and existing industries by establishing a multilateral mechanism for ecological, social, cultural, and economic evaluation of technologies. Enact moratorium on all technologies that can damage Earth cycles, such as geo-engineering and deep sea mining.

And here is also the Oxfam document on inequalities:

<http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/working-for-the-few-economic-inequality>



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