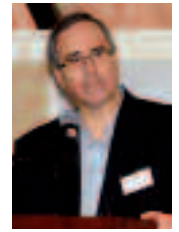




The State of Global Emergency



Ervin Laszlo and David Woolfson

If the preceding articles have provided various perspectives on the state of the world, this piece represents a call to action. Here we present the first part. You can endorse the Declaration and find a summary of the principal recommendations contained in 'Worldshift 2012: The Handbook of Timely Change' on www.clubofbudapest.org – the document also contains a summary of the major global trends and challenges of the 21st century.

Preamble

WHEREAS the global financial and economic crisis; worldwide climate change; on-going wars, terrorism and nuclear brinksmanship; peaking or exhaustion of non-renewable natural resources; approaching water crisis; annual net increase in world population by approximately 80 million; increase in world poverty, homelessness and famine in absolute numbers; growing gap between wealthy and poor both within and between nations; and other interrelated macro-trends, provides growing and indisputable evidence that the world today is fundamentally unsustainable and that humanity is rapidly moving to the breakdown of currently operative societal and ecological systems.

AND WHEREAS notwithstanding these global-scale crises facing the human community, the thinking and actions of the majority of political and business leaders remain fixed - on the short-term rather than the long-term; on national rather than global priorities; on self-interest rather than community interest; on confrontation and militarization rather than cooperation and dialogue; on the values and consciousness of the 19th century rather than the 21st century; on maintaining the status quo of 'business as usual' rather than shifting to urgently needed new economic, energy and social systems - locally, nationally and internationally.

THEREFORE in awareness of these growing global crises and the on-going lack of needed national and world leadership in the mainstream of politics and business, we hereby issue this urgent call for action, as a "State of Global Emergency Declaration", on behalf of and for the benefit of all the People of the World.

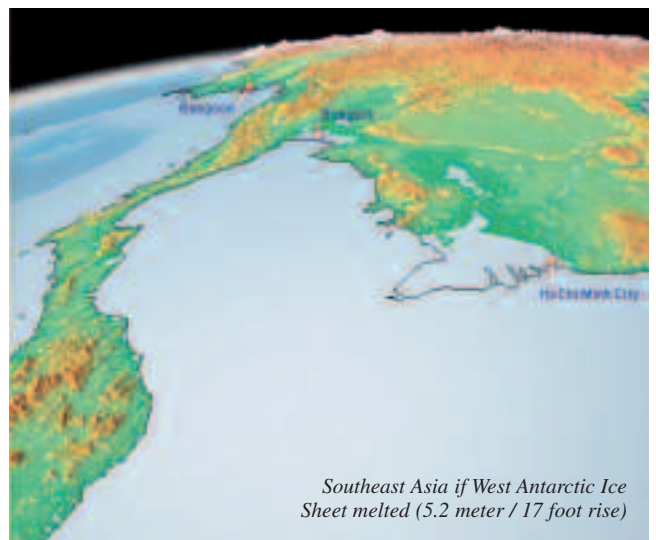
The Global Emergency Declaration

The global-scale crises before humanity today affect every person and every society. If we continue on our present unsustainable path, by mid-century the Earth may become largely uninhabitable for human and most other forms of life. Such a total systems-collapse could also occur much sooner, due to runaway global warming or other ecocatastrophes, and/or by nuclear wars triggered by religious, ethnic or geopolitical conflicts or over access to diminishing natural resources.

The related global macro-trends have been apparent for many decades and are now building toward a threshold of irreversibility. The scientific modelling of complex systems shows that when systems reach a state of critical instability, they either break down to their components or break through to a higher order of integral functioning. At these "points of no return" maintaining the status quo, or returning to a previous mode of organization and functioning, are not feasible.

Time-estimates of when the 'point of no return' will be reached for the global system of humanity have shrunk from the end of the century to mid-century, then to the next twenty years, and recently to the next five to twenty years. For example, it was predicted that the Earth's average temperature will increase by about 3° Celsius by the year 2100, then it was said that this level of increase will come about by the middle of the century, and lately that it could possibly occur within a decade. The figure for overall warming has been increased from 3° C to 6° C or higher. Global warming of 3° C would cause serious disruptions to human activity, while a 6° C rise would be a 'global breakdown' making most of the planet unsuitable for human life.

These predictions, however, take only one trend into consideration: global warming; water availability; food



Southeast Asia if West Antarctic Ice Sheet melted (5.2 meter / 17 foot rise)

production; poverty; population pressure; air pollution, etc. This approach fails to consider the impacts of the interconnection of the macro-trends as well as the feedback loops within them. When one trend reaches a critical point its impact on other trends can be very significant. For example, if global warming creates prolonged drought in some areas and coastal flooding in others, starving and homeless masses will flood less hard-hit regions and create social and economic upheavals there with critical food and water shortages.

The acceleration of critical trends and cross-impacts among them indicates that the 'window of opportunity' for pulling out of the present global crisis and breaking through to a more peaceful and sustainable world is likely to be no more than four to five years from the end of 2008. This is close in time to the Mayan 2012 prophecy for the end of the current world.

The period around the end of 2012 is likely to be a turbulent one for this and other reasons. Predictions coming from the physical sciences foresee disturbances in the geomagnetic, electromagnetic and related fields that embed the planet causing significant damage to telecommunications and impacting many aspects of human activity and health. For the esoteric traditions the end of 2012 will be the end of the known world, although the more optimistic interpretations speak of a new world taking the place of the old.

While the majority of the world's people have yet to recognize the possibility of a total global-scale breakdown, millions of forward-thinking groups and individuals have been addressing the threats and challenges for many years. This 'waking up' is a positive sign of the vitality of the human spirit and its ability to respond to the dangers that face humanity with flexibility and creativity. It must be furthered and facilitated in all appropriate ways as the scale and urgency of the required transformation is far greater than the scope of current efforts. It will be a case of 'too little, too late' unless the human community as a whole moves quickly to address the threatening macro-trends before they become irreversible.

This must now be our top planetary priority. Failure to implement a worldwide shift in the window of time available to us will almost certainly lead to the breakdown of our civilization and possibly to the demise of our species. We acknowledge the real possibility that a child born today could witness the final chapter of modern man's 200,000 year existence on this planet.

The Way Forward

If humanity is not to perish, as other species have that failed to respond to their changed conditions, we must face and creatively cope with the unintended consequences of the narrow and short-term thinking that has led to today's unsustainable global situation. No 'quick fix' or 'miracle technology' will save us from the consequences of the misguided values and actions of the past. Only by engaging the human spirit in all its creativity and potential wisdom can we give birth to the necessary new thinking and actions.

The currently dominant mode of thinking cannot be maintained any longer. We must overcome the societal inertia generated by the powerful, self-destructive remnants of bygone eras in order to prepare in each region, nation and community for systemic disruptions and possible collapses. We must radically reconsider our view of the world and restructure its principal operative systems: energy, economics, governance, transportation, food, resource use and distribution, among others. We must act to extend the window of time available to us before it becomes too late to avoid breakdown on a global scale.

Every crisis harbors within it the opportunity for change and transformation. The ideas and designs for the needed new systems, structures and technologies already exist. Today we are rediscovering essential elements of the wisdom inherent in the world's great cultural traditions and making important scientific discoveries regarding the nature of reality, our connections to each other and to nature. At the same time we are developing alternative energy sources, sustainable technologies, global communications and information flows, biotechnology, nanotechnology, artificial intelligence, and other technologies capable of paving the way toward global sustainability for human communities and the environment.

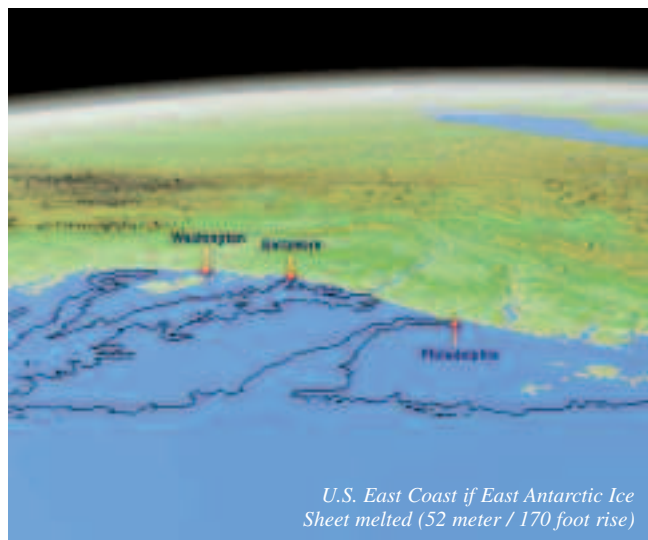
Our new thinking and new tools can accelerate the emergence of a new world in sufficient time to avoid the 'worst case' scenarios - if we act now. Time is short and the task unprecedented.

Effective and feasible solutions to the present global emergency must be brought to the attention of as many people as possible, as quickly as possible, to motivate urgent and effective action by all aware and responsible global citizens. Widespread communication and collaboration amongst people, nations, cultures, religions, societal sectors, professions, associations, networks, organizations, and other groups, is essential to ensure humanity's survival on this planet.

The new Club of Budapest report *Worldshift 2012 – The Handbook of Timely Change* advances a feasible whole-systems concept for the urgently needed epochal shift. It is a 'Worldshift - a worldwide shift from a path of unsustainability, conflict and confrontation to a path toward global sustainability, wellbeing and peace.' The Report's proposals for achieving this Worldshift, together with the proposals of the Declaration's signatories, form an integral part of this document.

ACCORDINGLY, WE HEREBY ISSUE AN URGENT CALL to all the People and Peoples of the World to declare their awareness of the state of global emergency and their firm commitment to join together to carry out real and meaningful change in all sectors of society (education, governance, economy, media, culture, technology) and at all levels (local, national, and global) for the common good of all people and all societies, and all life on Earth.

(The list of Signatories of the Declaration will be published immediately after its formal adoption following the Global Emergency Consultation.)



U.S. East Coast if East Antarctic Ice Sheet melted (52 meter / 170 foot rise)