

## A New Era

*"It's time to cease to be who we were  
to become who we are capable of being".  
Marianne Williamson*

"I have the feeling that I'm living the end several eras", wrote Miguel Delibes who always looked with farsightedness into the future. The immense majority of political leaders live anchored in the past, without realizing that at last, after many centuries of absolute male power in which the vast majority of human beings were anonymous, invisible, obedient and fearful, great changes are now advancing on the horizon that will progressively enable all people to "be," to cease being passive spectators and to become true protagonists.

It will then be possible to put into practice the lucid expression of "We, the Peoples..." of the Preamble to the United Nations Charter, because new information and communications technologies have enabled a considerable number of human beings to "become visible", to participate, to express their points of view, and their protests and proposals, acquiring global citizenship and an awareness of the world that allows them to compare, appreciate what they have and comprehend the needs of others.

But for this change of era it was particularly essential to be able to count on the participation of women –with their inherent respect for life and lack of propensity for the use of force and domination to impose their opinions- since equality is one of the principal pillars of this new paradigm.

The world today must recognize and acknowledge this unique citizen power. Civil society, subjected since the beginning of time, will now in a short few years become the protagonist of multiple changes, despite the inertia and despite the obstacles of every kind put in its way by those who continue to cling to power and refuse to accept their responsibility to overcome the systemic crisis affecting all humanity that has produced so much conflict, especially in the most vulnerable in the fabric of society.

If there is no evolution, there will be a revolution, but this time surely a bloodless one, because it will essentially be fought in cyberspace. Those who have imposed their ambitions of dominance and replaced ethical values for the laws of the marketplace and the United Nations for groups of plutocrats (G6, G7, G8... G20), are responsible not only for our economic collapse but also for having created at the dawn of this new century and millennium the present inadmissible social inequalities and a total lack of institutional and personal leadership.

In effect –and I don't tire of repeating this because it's motivation for daily action- 60,000 people, the majority of them children between the ages of one and five, die each day of hunger while during the same period 4 billion dollars are invested in weapons and military spending.

At this time the precious verses of José Ángel Valente are quite appropriate: "I write from a shipwreck. / From what we have destroyed / especially in ourselves... / ...But I also write from life / ... from a world that will come".

For this to be possible it was necessary to expand the horizons of so many imprisoned dwellers of the earth. So that they could express themselves. So that they could be equal in dignity... All of this is suddenly possible. The “world to come” is advancing with giant strides. New information and communication technologies are essential ingredients of this sudden human “epiphany”, this ceasing to be silent and imperceptible.

“The foremost objective of each generation,” said President Nelson Mandela, “is to take into account the next”. Intergenerational responsibility must be placed at the forefront, at a time in which, obsessed with the present of a few, we are realizing that we have forgotten what is most important: the welfare of our children and descendants, the habitability of the earth, the quality of an ecosystem in which all human beings, who are now identifiable, visible and capable of expressing themselves, can fully develop their distinctive characteristics.

We are witnessing the beginning of a new era for humanity –human activities influence the environment- and for once and for all the force of reason must prevail over the reason of force. However, the large multinational consortia continue to base the “progress” of mankind on fossil fuels.

As with all potentially irreversible processes, it is urgent to achieve a global agreement to counteract the serious environmental changes presently ensuing, supervised by the United Nations that would already be endowed with an Environmental Security Council.

In a few years we must promote the recapture of CO<sub>2</sub> by phytoplankton in the seas, discover alloys capable of transporting large quantities of electricity, foment the use of renewable energies (photovoltaic, thermo solar, wind..., panels on homes and public buildings, hybrid and electric cars...), for once and for all investing in “life safety” a part -30-40% would suffice- of what is presently spent on military security, which includes only 20% of all human beings.

Instead of so many aircraft designed for out-dated wars, it is urgent to have planes and equipment to fight forest fires, floods, and natural and man-made disasters, using scientifically designed strategies.

Citizen power should have immediate nuclear disarmament as one of its first demands. This would require another global agreement supported by a colossal outcry of the citizens of the world.

Many diagnoses have been offered over the last few years. What is now lacking is a timely treatment to promote true change at the global level before it's too late. We need the *new paradigm* proposed by professors Ivo Slaus and Garry Jacobs of the World Academy of Arts & Science, which I'm sure will soon be adopted thanks to the demands of the people, the “We, the Peoples”, acting with determination.

With a re-founded United Nations endowed with a General Assembly composed of equal representation from States and civil society, in which in addition to the present Security Council and the abovementioned Environmental Security Council, there would also be a Socio-economic

Security Council, so that the transition from our current economy of speculation, outsourcing of production and war to an economy of sustainable human global development may shortly become a reality.

It is rash and shortsighted to believe that a finite world can grow indefinitely without replacing what is consumed, without carefully devoting ourselves to the preservation of the earth, without tracing a new course for the future. What is infinite is the capacity for creativity that distinguishes all human beings. And this is our hope for resolving both the economic crises and the social crises that they have provoked.

As the Preamble to the Earth Charter underscores, “We stand at a critical moment in the earth’s history, a time when humanity must choose its future”.

“No challenge is beyond the reach of human creativity”, proclaimed President John F. Kennedy in 1963. It is essential to facilitate the global endogenous sustainable human development that was advocated at that time as the best formula for world governance, so that all human beings and not only a few may benefit from scientific progress.

Only in the context of genuine democracy will it be possible to transcend from a culture of imposition, violence, domination and war to a culture of unity, dialogue, conciliation, alliance and peace.

The immense power of social networking will provide the cornerstone for this great transition from subjects to full citizens, from force to words.

Given its scope and depth, the digital revolution will be the most important one of all times. In anthropological, social and economic terms the world will never be the same. Increased longevity will provide knowledge and experience that will make the universal dream of equal dignity a reality. The wealthy neighborhood of the global village will expand so that the injustices and inequalities that cloud the horizons today will diminish and eventually dissipate in the future.

In summary, we are facing times of profound social changes taking place with unprecedented speed. Unprecedented circumstances that, as Amin Maalouf noted, require unprecedented solutions. And almost inadvertently we are confronted with a new human being capable of intervening, expressing his opinions, and fully assuming his corresponding responsibilities. The time for silence, obedience, and anonymity... is over.

A new era is dawning. "Let the voice / of everyone be heard, solemnly and clearly / ...everything has yet to be done and everything is possible / ...but who but all of us can do it?" wrote Miquel Martí i Pol so lucidly.

The voice of all peoples. At last, speaking, everyone speaking. Words, a new era, a new beginning.

Federico Mayor Zaragoza

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