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SPERI – PACS

GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, AND THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLES¹

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The human world, as part of nature's biodiversity, is made up of an immense variety of beings, personalities, cultures, and ideals; across space-time, also a variety of civilizations. I call this dimension of human reality **noodiversity**. At the same time, it aspires **towards unity**.

Who are we? What makes us complex and contradictory beings? What is the role of freedom in our making? Is Humankind the center-species of the Earth, empowered to dominate her and have a merely functional relationship with her? Are we aimed at endless production for endless consumption and endless accumulation by a few? How can the right of ownership and management of the productive means and resources be extended to each and every working citizen, man and woman, rather than being a privilege of only a few? If our bodies do not grow beyond a certain limit, why should the economy – the care of the houses that shelter us during our pilgrimage on Earth – grow indefinitely?

The natural milieu gave us birth, nourishes us and recycles our bodies after we die. Native peoples around the world cherish Matter and Nature as Pachamama, Mother-Earth, Earth-Goddess, and the like. They have worshiped the invisible dimension of Nature and Matter, understanding its external, material dimension as manifestations of an inner Life Force that unifies biodiversity and also noodiversity.

Industrial-financial society turned values around and converted the Earth, the common goods, and even humans into commodities – things to be sold and bought. The multidimensional crisis humankind is going through is awakening humans to traditional knowledge and wisdoms. In my view, however, human history evolves not in circles, but rather in a spiral. Valuing traditional peoples does not preempt the challenge posed by industrial-financial societies of overcoming its materialistic, technocratic, self-centered cosmology. How can Humankind make this quantum leap

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towards a holistic, life-centered paradigm? Are there signs that this leap is being accomplished? Or is it an impossible utopia to be rejected by those attached to the “real world”?

PACS is committed to an innovative vision and practice of politics, development, education and globalization.

POLITICS – PACS collaborates with the thrust to re-create politics as the art of serving the people, of sharing, rather than concentrating the power of managing socioeconomic development. Innovative politics implies rooting its practice in friendship, trust and cooperation, rather than war, mistrust and competition is another work front. This implies the constitution and empowerment of healthy, self-managed communities/villages as the main units of socioeconomic development, like cells of the social organism.

The current civilizational crisis, in my view, has to do with the collapse of patriarchal forms of interpersonal relationships and of social, political and religious organizations. Overcoming all types of inequalities – gender, social, economic, cultural, ethnic – and supporting the empowerment of those who suffer oppression and alienation are key elements of the work of PACS. And re-building globalization and socioeconomic planning from the bottom up, starting with communities and local governments, and moving upward to the levels of cities, metropolises, biomes, river basins, nations, regions, continents, oceans, and the planet.

Development means the unfolding of potentials and attributes of an organism, a human person, a collective, a nation, and humankind. GDP measures material wealth. GNH takes the multidimensional human being in her-his natural context as the core reference, and measures integral good living and happiness in the never-ending process of human development. Integral good living and happiness cannot be reduced to material wealth accumulation. Material wealth is limited, human development is unlimited. The human body is limited in space-time and in needs. The human spirit – individual and collective - is unlimited and material wealth cannot supply all its needs to unfold its endless potentials of self-esteem, conscious solidarity, creativity, compassion and empathy.

GNH carries a key premise: that the meaning of human existence goes much beyond our material beings. GNH has the potential of unveiling our non-material dimensions and devising economic activity as a means to serve the human individual, collective and species. It also helps society understand Life as the most encompassing context of human existence, and to direct socioeconomic development towards the enhancement of Life on Earth and in the Cosmos.

In the context of the SPERI/Hanoi project, PACS is committed to seek the means to promote in 2016 two native village studies, one in the Brazilian Amazon, the other in Colombian Amazon.

The project will focus on the access of those villages to Sovereign Livelihood Rights:

1. The right to land, forest, water, clean air and natural landscape

2. The right to one's own religion
3. The right to live according to one's own way of life and values off happiness and well-being, within one's own natural environment
4. The right to operate according to one's own knowledge and decide what to plant, initiate, create or invent on one's own land
5. The right to co-manage or co-govern natural resources with neighboring communities and local authorities.

PACS intends to facilitate exchanges between native villagers from the countries involved in the Speri project – Vietnam and Laos in the Mekong Valley, Bhutan, New Zealand, Vanuatu, Bolivia, Brazil and Colombia.