

3.7. THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

We will know what all people want when the first global human referendum has been held, the votes have been counted and the results are being announced. The only fair way to determine how we should run our business is by asking everybody to make a simultaneous decision on the matter.

- The decision-making process of the world currently lies in the hands of well under 1% of the total population.
- The fundamental wealth of the planet has been concentrated in the same few hands for generations and circulates in institutions that are completely out of reach to the vast majority of the world population.
- The degree of direct suffering due to economic disenfranchisement has reached catastrophic proportions.

Dictatorships of previous centuries have shown that a system of total domination and exploitation yields fast results for the ruling minority. But watch out, the people always end up searching for a more equitable solution.

Grand social change is best accomplished peacefully. The very process for change needs to run on democratic principles. Technology is on our side, sufficient resources exist to satisfy everybody's need and the problems themselves appear to be solvable.

By improving the lives of all the people on the planet we can create tangible and permanent stability.

Let us collectively define the philosophy of our time.

4. PRACTICAL

4.1. RESOLUTION OF SUFFERING

Organizing, holding, disseminating and broadcasting the global human referendum costs 2'634'700'000 US\$. Should the people of the world make the courageous decisions to resolve any or all of the world's problems, practical solutions take immediate effect.

Providing a basic, livable existence to everybody does not cut into the comfort zone of those who already enjoy an elevated economic status. The misconception that there isn't enough to go around can be proven wrong.

XVI. COST OF ALLEVIATION

QUESTION 1 — HEALTH:

WATER

WATER PROBLEMS: The absence of a safe water supply contributes to an estimated 80% of disease and death in the developing world. 70% of the world's population lives in countries that do not achieve safe water goals set by the United Nations. 60% of rural families and 25% of urban homes on the planet lack safe water. In total, well over 1 billion people need immediate access to improved water sources. Water-borne diseases such as cholera, cryptosporidium, guinea worm and schistosomiasis affect over 300 million people on a daily basis.

WATER SOLUTIONS: Techniques have been perfected that allow for the desalinization of ocean water, digging of deeper wells and the construction of reservoirs. In most instances such comprehensive and supervised efforts to construct new and improve existing sources can raise the water quality to a healthy level. Financially assisted programs that provide tools and training for tapping into subterranean water tables have proven to be highly effective in rural areas. A joint program of the Indian government, UNICEF and local non-governmental organizations now supplies water to over 550 million Indian citizens with 2.2 million hand pumps, at an annual cost of \$4.00 per person. India's rural access to potable water rose from 30% in 1980 to 80% in 1992 as a result of such programs.

COSTS TO FIX WATER PROBLEMS: 1'000'000'000 people do not have clean drinking water. Installation costs for a clean water system range from less than 5.00 US\$ per person served to 100 US\$ per person. On the average it would cost 50 US\$ per person to alleviate this problem. This includes investment in water and sanitation materials, training programs and coordinated research and development support.

1'000'000'000 X 50 US\$ = 50'000'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES WATER NEEDS.

FOOD

FOOD PROBLEMS: 32% of the world population lack basic micro-nutrients. 20% of all people lack sufficient income in cash to meet the most basic biological needs for food. 830 million people are severely malnourished and live with this chronic medical condition on a daily basis. 16 million people a year starve to death.

FOOD SOLUTIONS: Many people are too poor to buy readily available food, even though the world currently produces enough wheat, rice and other grains to provide every human being with 3,500 calories a day. That doesn't count many other commonly eaten foods such as vegetables, beans, nuts, root crops, fruits, grass-fed meats, and fish. When all these are included, enough food is available to provide at least 4.3 pounds of food per person, per day, worldwide. Even most "hungry countries" have enough food for all their people right now. Many individuals in those countries just can't afford to pay the same high prices for the commodities as the rich countries that import the agricultural products. The donation and transportation of the mountains of surplus foods to those in need and a long-term reassessment on agricultural policies can lead to a rapid alleviation on the burden that the starving carry. Focused famine relief, international food banks, seed, equipment and fertilizer distribution and a sustainable agriculture education program can permanently pull hundreds of millions of people from starvation.

COSTS TO FIX FOOD PROBLEMS: 1'300'000'000 people can not meet their basic biological need for food. It is estimated that 75 US\$ needs to be invested in every person who is starving. This quantity would enable that person to continuously take care of his or her nutrition needs.

1'300'000'000 X 75 US\$ = 97'500'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES FOOD NEEDS.

SANITATION

SANITATION PROBLEMS: The UN estimates that close to half of the population in all urban areas within developing countries lives in inner-city slums. 38% of the world population does not have basic sanitation. Living next to open sewers is one of the biggest contributing factors in the spread of preventable diseases.

SANITATION SOLUTIONS: Ecological sanitation solves problems by conserving fresh water resources, promoting dignified and healthy living, and recycling nutrients from human waste for use in agriculture. By using traditional, well-established techniques we can easily construct sewage systems, septic tanks and latrines with minimal financial investment.

COSTS TO FIX SANITATION PROBLEMS: Many elements that alleviate the worst conditions for the 2'394'000'000 people in need of basic sanitation, occur in conjunction with the effort for water purification. The advancement of rural areas costs up to twenty times more than the integration of people in densely populated urban zones. With an average of 30 US\$ per person the most atrocious living conditions can be cleaned up and permanent sanitation systems can be constructed, installed and maintained.

2'394'000'000 X 30 US\$ = 71'820'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES SANITATION NEEDS.

HEALTH CARE AND MEDICINES

HEALTH CARE AND MEDICINE PROBLEMS: 62% of the world population lives in countries that are not on track to reduce the under-5 mortality rate. 32% of all people lack low-cost, essential medicines. 30% of the population in the Southern hemisphere (Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America, South America, Southern and Eastern Asia) suffers from one or more illnesses. 23% of the world population completely lacks any access to basic health service at all. Every single day 30'000 children die from preventable diseases.

HEALTH CARE AND MEDICINE SOLUTIONS: The primary focus emphasizes preventive medicine, childbirth assistance, first aid solutions, basic drug dispensation, nutrition programs, and health education. Community Health Providers that receive 6-9 months of intensive training and supervision can handle 75% of all illnesses and health problem needs of the planet. Health workers under such a system can provide immunizations, vaccinations, antibiotics, oral rehydration therapies, growth monitoring, iron and vitamin supplements, advice and help with natal care, breast feeding, birth spacing, weaning, contraception, AIDS prevention and the prevention of other illnesses as well as the referral of seriously ill patients to the nearest health facility. Many countries have used this method to make dramatic improvements in lowering infant, child and maternal mortality rates, as well as raising overall life expectancy and other indicators on the state of health. More time and resources need to be allocated for pharmaceutical research on health problems without economic concerns. Medicines already exist to cure many sick people. These remedies just need to be transported to those people who need them and be made available to them at reasonable terms.

COSTS TO FIX HEALTH CARE AND MEDICINES PROBLEMS: Training one health worker for an average of every 200 families that desperately need basic medical attention costs a total of 750 million US\$. Providing supervision, regular retraining, infrastructure, support, basic medical supplies and salaries to these health-care workers would cost approximately 15 billion US\$ per year. Such a system is not fee-based. The collection of regionally adjustable fees would reduce this cost substantially. Initial training of new health care workers = 750'000'000 US\$. 5 years of supervision, support, supplies and salaries = 75'000'000'000 US\$

TOTAL OF 75'750'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES HEALTH / MEDICINES NEEDS.

QUESTION 1 - HEALTH: TOTAL COST TO FIX THE LACK OF WATER + FOOD + SANITATION + HEALTH CARE + MEDICINES =

295'070'000'000 US \$ OR 59'014'000'000 US\$ PER YEAR FOR 5 YEARS.

QUESTION 2 - ACCESS

TRADE

TRADE PROBLEMS: 73% of the world's population lives in the “developing” world. The average person living in these countries faces insurmountable obstacles when trying to sell or trade into the global market. Travel and work restrictions alone make it almost impossible for entrepreneurs to reach outside a very limited circle. For the powerful and well-funded few exactly the opposite seems to be true. Transnational corporations and financial institutions treat trade obstacles as sheer formalities. Double standards regulate everything from import/export duties to the prices paid for the manufacturing of goods and salaries.

TRADE SOLUTIONS: Many of the existing financial and trade organizations can serve as very effective platforms for the spread of fair and universally beneficial business practices. Immediate steps to enhance the circulation of trade-related benefits include the end of agricultural export subsidies, the reduction of over-production and export dumping, the adjustment of patent rules and the stabilization of prices for primary commodities. The liberalization of immigration rules and lifting travel restrictions as well as the reduction of unnecessary duties and taxes can instantaneously and drastically improve business opportunities worldwide. The existing interwoven markets and co-dependent economies offer a fertile breeding ground for an accessible source of wealth for everyone. Poor countries have been successfully integrated into regional organizations such as the European Union by applying established trading and investment techniques. With well-managed assistance, any country can immediately improve opportunities, infrastructure and the standard of living.

COSTS TO FIX TRADE PROBLEMS: The solutions themselves can generate steady financial growth from the outset. “Developed” countries spend approximately 1 billion US \$ a day on domestic agricultural subsidies. Resources from such subsidies can be freed up and allocated to finance an universally fair and profitable system. Limited initial investment guarantees a managed restructuring process and a smooth transition until the expanded system's resources can replenish themselves. Most trade barriers exist as bureaucratic red tape and are cheap to abolish and change.

TOTAL OF 32'000'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES TRADE NEEDS.

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS: 56% of all people receive as much income per year as the richest 1% of the planet already own. Debt and interest payment from the poorest countries to financial institutions worldwide amounts to 199'000'000'000 US\$ per year. Many of the loans that hold a good part of the “developing” world in its grip have been misappropriated and never reached the people that they were intended for. The wealth of the planet is systematically siphoned off to the “developed” world through an entrenched network of skewed exchanges. The debt remains, stifling productivity and creating an impediment to future investment while the average citizen in the “developing” world shoulders all the weight.

WEALTH DISTRIBUTION SOLUTIONS: Nobody expects to collect piles of paper money, precious metals, stock options and jewels into a big mountain and then hand little plastic bags of loot to everybody. Wealth doesn't work like that. The systematic process of rectification requires a new wave of aggressive investments that doesn't continue the cycles of dependency. A fundamental re-evaluation of the trading mentality and the lifting of crippling restrictions stimulates the circulation of wealth. Microcredit programs to small businesses and entrepreneurs have proven to be immensely successful and can serve as a perfect basis for the expanded effort to distribute wealth to the planet. A comprehensive debt retirement program will enable nations to meet and renegotiate their destabilizing repayment schedule. Most of the tangible wealth in the form of resources is already located in the “developing” world. This wealth

can reach the people that need it the most when a simple restructuring process occurs that deliberately includes all people into the flow of wealth and guarantees equal value for goods and services everywhere.

COSTS TO FIX WEALTH DISTRIBUTION PROBLEMS: \$500 billion of current debt needs to be discounted so that heavily indebted nations can make strategic investments that will strengthen their economies and produce self-sustaining growth. Some “developing” nations pay 30% to 40% of their foreign exchange earnings on servicing debts. The immediate capital that can be freed up to invest in the local community becomes evident. Stabilized national economies are better able to attract outside investment and generate more revenues from internal sources for social programs. The expansion of economies, the creation of more jobs, an increased standard of living and social stability are all pleasant effects of equalized and expanded wealth circulation.

TOTAL OF 218'000'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES WEALTH DISTRIBUTION NEEDS.

TECHNOLOGY

TECHNOLOGY PROBLEMS: 90% of the world population has never used the internet. 50% of all people have never made a phone call. 33% of humankind has no electricity.

TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS: The construction of the referendum network itself provides the first building blocks of a bridge over the digital divide. Taking advantage of the multiple existing communication systems and newly deployed power and communications lines, even more end-users can be connected into the global network. Access to technology is about more than just physical availability. Real access requires user-friendly hardware, training possibilities, content in local languages and a supportive environment.

COSTS TO FIX TECHNOLOGY PROBLEMS: The smart and cheap alternative to individual access can be found in the establishment of public Telecenters that serve private, commercial and educational needs. The American National Telephone Cooperative Association, which brings together rural telecommunications companies and cooperatives, estimates the cost of setting up a simple telephone shop at between 3000 US\$ and 10'000 US\$. If one Telephone shop is set up for every 1000 users and this occurs for half the world's population that means: 3'150'000 Telephone Shops at 6'500 US\$ = 20'475'000'000 US\$. Expansion of Landlines, Electricity and Satellite Systems = 15'000'000'000 US\$. Publicly Accessible Hardware = 12'000'000'000 US\$.

TOTAL OF 47'475'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES TECHNOLOGY NEEDS.

EDUCATION

EDUCATION PROBLEMS: 850 million people are illiterate. 130 million children of school age are growing up without access to basic education. Girls represent nearly 60% of the children out of school. In many countries, this gender gap widens even further at the secondary level. Although education is the most fundamental tool to improve one's standard of living it seems to be a topic that is often deliberately neglected. Education programs inevitably become the first victims of budget cuts and structural adjustments. The sorry state of public education affects the richest and the poorest countries alike.

EDUCATION SOLUTIONS: A special focus has to address the inclusion of women and girls into the educational process. Literacy can be improved in the short term for children and adults by using already existing books and tools. Computer-literacy courses and distance-learning programs combine expanded access and advanced training for both teachers and students. The development of technology skills and the dissemination of educational content can occur in remotely connected classrooms. Improving education is largely a matter of intensive teacher training, the establishing of resource centers, the connection of educational networks and the establishment of an international curriculum.

COSTS TO FIX EDUCATION PROBLEMS: Educator recruitment and training alongside the distribution of traditional learning tools amounts to one of the cheapest and yet one of the most important components to help people lift themselves from chronic poverty. Most of the technology needed to connect schools and learning institutions has already been covered in the technology section.

TOTAL OF 12'000'000'000 US\$ - SOLVES EDUCATION NEEDS.

QUESTION 2 - ACCESS: TOTAL COST TO FIX THE LACK OF ACCESS TO TRADE + WEALTH DISTRIBUTION + TECHNOLOGY + EDUCATION =

309'475'000'000 US \$ OR 61'895'000'000 US\$ PER YEAR FOR 5 YEARS.

QUESTION 3 - SAFETY**VIOLENT CONFLICT AND WAR**

VIOLENT CONFLICT AND WAR PROBLEMS: 68% of all people live in countries where the government is involved in a form of violent conflict. In the last century, the lives of 250 million people were deliberately extinguished through wars, government inflicted deaths, politically motivated murder and famine triggered by violent conflict. 50% of civilian casualties in war are children.

VIOLENT CONFLICT AND WAR SOLUTIONS: The resolution of violent conflicts and wars relies on a simple change of attitude. In thousands of years of collective history not a single act of aggression has ever led to a permanent state of stability and peace. The fundamental tools for arbitration are already in place. The resolution of all conflicts can take place through diplomacy. By fixing the global problems regarding health and access (Questions 1 & 2), 99.9% of all reasons that lead to violent conflicts are eliminated right from the start.

COSTS TO FIX VIOLENT CONFLICT AND WAR PROBLEMS: By reducing aggressive activities and redirecting the efforts of the arms industries and militaries, many much-needed funds, know-how and resources can be allocated to constructive programs.

NO COST TO SOLVE VIOLENT CONFLICT AND WAR NEEDS.

QUESTION 3 - SAFETY: TOTAL COST TO RESOLVE VIOLENT CONFLICTS AND WARS = 0 US \$

SUMMARY COSTS FOR HEALTH + ACCESS + SAFETY	
WATER:	50'000'000'000
FOOD:	97'500'000'000
SANITATION:	71'820'000'000
HEALTH CARE AND MEDICINES:	75'750'000'000
TRADE:	32'000'000'000
WEALTH DISTRIBUTION:	218'000'000'000
TECHNOLOGY:	47'475'000'000
EDUCATION:	12'000'000'000
WAR AND VIOLENT CONFLICT:	NO COST
GRAND TOTAL:	604'545'000'000
OR 120'909'000'000 US\$ PER YEAR FOR 5 YEARS.	

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL OF THE SOLUTIONS ABOVE TAKES A TOTAL OF FIVE YEARS. IN ALL CASES THE PROGRAMS ARE DESIGNED TO CONSTRUCT AS WELL AS SUSTAIN THE IMPROVED SITUATION.

The biggest ailments are preventable and resolvable. We know how many of us are hurting and what it costs to fix the problems.

The suffering of everybody is quantifiable.

It just costs money to fix the problems facing humankind.

Money. That's it.