

More Unity and More Diversity on the Planet in 2050

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My vision of a desirable planet in 2050 is one where there is much more unity and much more diversity on many levels:

- ✓ Humanity has embraced her common ‘soul’, origin and destiny and work as a unified body in her efforts to reduce her pressure on the planet’s ecosystems and their services to tolerable levels.
- ✓ Humanity has embraced more broadly an intellectual and emotional perspective in relation to the planet grounded in unity and interconnectedness with the whole earth system and beyond, a perspective is supported by science and which all her spiritual traditions endorse
- ✓ Humanity has embraced diversity as a desirable feature of ecological systems where she learns to make the diversity of species and abiotic environments the foundation of agri-, silvi-, and aqua-culture rather than her current focus on reducing diversity to a minimum
- ✓ Humanity has embraced diversity as a highly desirable feature of human systems where she actively nurtures the rich diverse cultural heritage and actively draws on it in designing institutions for governance of the earth system

The endorsement of this vision as a possible one relies on a view of human nature which is fundamentally deeper than the biological species which in the form of homo economicus considers herself in isolation from her community and sees only material comforts as the purpose of life. It rather requires a view of human beings as in essence social and spiritual beings who each also seeks fulfilment in having loving relationships, serving her community and develop the qualities of her mind and soul. With this perspective on human nature, the pathway humanity needs to tread towards achieving the vision outlined above becomes considerably more walkable. Let me illustrate.

The path to this future involves the transformation of our knowledge and value systems and our institutions, not only small adjustments here and there. For example, in terms of *knowledge systems* access to knowledge through education including in the process of science and development of technology needs to be universalised, and the gaps between local and global knowledge, indigenous and scientific learning, and scientists and policymakers’ understanding of what is useful and usable knowledge for managing ecosystems needs to be bridged. *Value systems* needs to move towards global solidarity, tolerance and less materialist focus on human development allowing bridges to be built between nations, cultures and religions, and between man and nature needs to be encouraged through both educational and political systems, through media, arts, and all dimensions of human creativity. The *institutions*, those formal and informal laws and codes of conduct that societies’ are permeated by, need to be designed to support integration and coherence in policies and governance horizontally and vertically so that each governance level is seen to have a crucial and unique role and being mutually

supportive. Furthermore, they need to encourage open and transparent decision-making processes, often with participation of all stakeholders, to enable a rich diversity of approaches to ecosystem management that are both locally and globally sustainable.

These are fundamental transformations that I portray but 'muddling through' will not lead us to a unified planet it all its diversity.