

# **Beyond Managing from Crisis to Crisis Dealing with the Environmental**

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**Creating the Necessary Conditions for a  
Sustainable, Peaceful and Secure Future**

**Report  
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## ***Executive Summary***

While the conventional approach and measures of dealing with the ecological crisis and environmental problems are necessary, they are far from sufficient. They do not address the fundamentals of the crisis. The approach of managing crises, with short- and medium-term measures addressing only environmental symptoms and consequences does not address the causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments. The conventional approach and measures can buy time for the longer-term developments required to deal with the deeper-rooted problems, but on their own they only continue an unsustainable way of understanding and managing human existence and development.

How traditionally and today we understand and manage human existence and development contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, causing persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society and the natural environment. It leads to changes in nature and natural developments that in the long-term will render the natural environment of the Earth uninhabitable for the human species.

Essentially, we meet non-material mental needs in material ways, exploiting and consuming natural resources beyond actual human natural material needs. And we collectively try to create in the world around us, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms, what by nature we must establish individually in the mind through mental work and effort. In the process we interfere with and degrade the natural environment beyond what is necessary in order to understand and manage human existence and development.

**Creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable, peaceful and secure future requires making the 21<sup>st</sup> century the century of the mind, mental existence and mental development.**

The problem is we fail to understand and manage the mind and mental existence. We fail to understand and manage where we consciously exist and act, where individually we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. We fail to understand and manage the place where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us; where we make choices and decisions, where we define goals and objectives, where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions. We fail to understand and manage where problems and difficulties have their roots and beginnings, and where answers and solutions must start.

Dealing with persisting and growing environmental problems and creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable, peaceful and secure future requires changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development. It requires understanding and managing existence and development, demands

and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions, everything in life we face and we have to deal with, at the level and within the context of understanding and managing, in the first instance, the mind and mental existence.

Creating the conditions necessary for a sustainable and secure future requires understanding and managing the mind, mental existence and mental development, from within the mind and mental existence, as reflected in individual experience. It requires meeting non-material mental needs in non-material ways, in the mind and mental existence, through mental work and effort. Understanding and managing existence and development in sustainable, peaceful and secure ways involves establishing the necessary internal mental conditions, in everything we do and we engage in, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us.

It requires developing the conceptual foundation and mental capacity, the understanding, the natural human mental potential, individual natural powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices, to understand and manage human existence and development from the inside out and from the ground up, not from the top down and from the outside in. It is essential to understand and manage existence and development from inside the mind and mental existence, at the level of the natural conditions of existence, common to all human beings, that lie behind and that are reflected in human experience, the experience of every individual human being. Not, as traditionally is the case, understanding and managing existence and development from the human-created socio-cultural level down to the level of the individual and the natural conditions of existence. Moreover, it is necessary to understand and manage them in their essence, in depth and detail, in a holistic, differentiated, but integrated, connected and related way. Not dividing and separating the conditions of existence into different issues, subject matters, disciplines, fields of study, and areas of human activity, specialization and expertise, defined and governed by different, competing and conflicting assumptions, aims, approaches and practices.

Dealing with the ecological crisis and environmental problems requires a change in focus from managing the economy to managing human existence and development. It requires understanding and managing human existence and development at the level of the individual, not macro-managing the economy from a higher level up, internationally and globally. Human existence is to be improved through improving understanding and managing the mind and mental existence, not through material possessions and consumption. Changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development requires cultural change and transformation, with every culture changing the historical path and direction of development, taking the next step in human conceptual and mental development and growth. It will require education and training in conceptual and mental development and growth.

**Creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable, peaceful and secure future requires making the 21<sup>st</sup> century the century of the mind, mental existence and mental development. Not the scientific study of the mind as a natural phenomena or just another human organ, but understanding and managing the mind and mental existence as the place where we consciously exist and act; the place where individually we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do.**

## ***I. Introduction***

The environment is on everyone's mind today. There is a growing awareness and rising concern about changes in the natural environment that threaten and impact upon human existence globally. There is concern about a looming ecological crisis and rising environmental problems—global warming, thinning of the ozone layer, pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, extinction of species, destruction of ecosystems, etc.—that will affect people around the world. There is also growing concern about the lack of action and “political will” to deal with the situation. There is much debate about the nature, causes and long-term consequences of the changes in the natural environment, the ecological crisis and environmental problems we face. But how serious are the crisis and the problems, and what are their long-term consequences? Are the causes natural or man-made? How can we impact on the natural

**The conventional approach at best is buying time for a path of development that is not sustainable.**

made? How can we deal reduce the human environment?

However, the ongoing measures fail to address the situation. Although the efforts are necessary, they are not sufficient to deal with the problems and challenges we face. They fail to deal with the causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments that have led to the crisis and problems. The proposed measures do not create the necessary conditions for a sustainable and secure future. They do not create the conditions necessary to understand and manage human existence and development in sustainable and secure ways.

debate and proposed the fundamentals of the current measures and

Conventional understanding and measures fall short of dealing with the causes behind the growing human impact upon the natural environment. The focus is upon addressing environmental symptoms and consequences, not the human causes. The approach is just to manage the crises and short- and medium-term measures, addressing only symptoms and consequences. The focus is not long-term development and change addressing underlying causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments. The natural environment is treated as just an additional factor in economic, political and social development. The natural environment is not considered and understood as the centre, the natural foundation and framework within which human existence and development take place and unfold.

The problems and challenges we face are more fundamental and substantial and much deeper-rooted than we are prepared to recognize and acknowledge. The ecological crisis and environmental problems need to be understood and addressed on a much broader, more detailed and in-depth level, considering the conditions of existence and how we got to where we find ourselves today. The conventional approach, at best, is buying time for a path of development that is

not sustainable. What is required is a change in the way we understand and manage human existence and development.

The limits of the conventional approach are illustrated by number of recent high profile reports on global warming and the human impact on the natural environment:

- WWF Living Planet Report 2006 (October 2006)
- Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change (November 2006)
- Greenpeace: energy [r]evolution—A Sustainable World Energy Outlook (January 2007)
- IPCC Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis (February 2007)

## **1. WWF Living Planet Report 2006**

WWF's *Living Planet 2006* is a biannual report, part of a series dating back to 1998 about the state of the natural world, the human impact upon it, the demands we make on the natural world, and the human ecological footprint. Based on two indices, the *Living Planet Index* and the *Ecological Footprint Index*, the report concludes that we are using the planet's resources faster than they can be renewed, and we face a rapid and continuing loss of biodiversity. The populations of vertebrate species have declined by about one-third in the 33 years between 1970 and 2003. Terrestrial species have declined by 31 percent, freshwater species by 28 percent and marine species by 27 percent. Natural ecosystems are being degraded at a rate unprecedented in human history.

According to the report, the human ecological footprint has increased in size to the point where the Earth is no longer able to regenerate and provide the required natural resources. We are in what the WWF terms "overshoot" – a state of consuming natural resources faster than the Earth can replace them. The human ecological footprint has increased threefold between 1961 and 2003, and grown by 4 percent since 2001. In 2003, the footprint exceeded biocapacity by 25 percent and was projected to rise to 30 percent in 2006. It now takes the Earth about one year and three months to regenerate what we use in a single year. By 2050, we will require twice the amount of natural resources that the planet can supply.

Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the use of fossil fuels accounts for almost half the total global footprint. It is its fastest growing component, increasing more than ninefold from 1961 to 2003. The causes are identified as our lifestyle, overconsumption, our model of economic development, how we generate and use energy, and our reliance upon fossil fuel.

The report presents three scenarios. In one, overshoot continues to grow, business as usual. In the two other scenarios, the overshoot is brought to an end at different rates. One method slowly shifts consumption down, seeing the

human footprint shrink by 15 percent from 2003 to 2100. The second method entails a path of rapid reduction that ends overshoot by 2050, with the human footprint 30 percent smaller in 2100 than it was in 2003.

The report argues that significant action is needed now and calls for economic, social and technological innovation in order to live on a smaller footprint. It calls for infrastructure that does not require a large throughput of resources to operate, and for finding ways for the average person to live well on less than half the current global average footprint. The report also seeks technologies that can significantly reduce climate-threatening CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and sustainable practices in various sectors, from fishery to forestry, to protect vital habitats and reduce the loss of biodiversity.

Other innovative approaches that consume fewer resources per person and increase efficiency in resource use could include:

- boosting the energy efficiency of homes;
- improving the efficiencies of product manufacturing processes;
- having cities and organizations track the demands they make on nature;
- contributing to programs that protect and restore ecosystems in order to help increase the planet's biocapacity;
- tracking ecological assets, maintaining ecological resources accounts and considering ecological limits in policy planning; and
- utilizing low-footprint infrastructure, design, urban planning and energy-efficient technologies.

According to the report, political negotiations are required to support necessary footprint reduction, global co-operation, consensus building, agreements and dialogue. Economic analyses will be necessary in order to determine the percentage of world gross domestic product (GDP) to be invested in reducing the human ecological footprint and increasing biocapacity. In addition, agreements will have to be reached on how much to shrink humanity's footprint, and how this reduction is to be shared between individuals and populations. Allocation strategies will need to be set from footprint shares to be traded between individuals, nations and regions. Resource accounting will have to ensure that ecological deficits and overshoot do not go unnoticed. Finally, baselines will have to be established, targets set, and successes or failures of sustainable strategies monitored.

## **2. Stern Review (2006)**

*The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* is a 700-page report prepared for the British government by Nicholas Stern, former chief economist for the World Bank and head of Britain's Government Economic Service since 2003. *The Stern Review* considers the economic costs of climate change, and the costs and benefits of action to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases and

adaptation to climate change. *The Stern Review* also considers policy options to manage the transition to a low-carbon economy and adapt to the climate change consequences that can no longer be avoided.

*The Stern Review* notes that climate change threatens the life of people around the world—it imperils access to water, food production, health, and use of land and the environment. Given current trends, global temperatures will rise by 2°C to 3°C over the next 50 years. Natural ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to climate change, with 15 to 40 percent of species facing extinction with a warming of 2°C. Ocean acidification, the result of rising CO<sub>2</sub> levels, will have major effects upon marine ecosystems, with serious consequences for fish stocks.

Economically, climate change will reduce welfare by an amount equivalent to a reduction in per capita consumption of between 5 and 20 percent. Urgent action is needed, according to *The Stern Review*. Demands for energy and transportation are growing in developing countries, and developed countries are due to renew a significant proportion of their infrastructure. Investments made in the next 10 to 20 years could lock in very high emissions for the next half-century, or present an opportunity to move the world onto a more sustainable path.

Human activity is identified as the cause of rising greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere and climate change, particularly industrial processes, expanding economies and economic growth, and rising demand for energy and transport. Since 1850, *The Stern Review* notes, North America and Europe have produced around 70 percent of all the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as a result of energy production.

Addressing the problem, according to *The Stern Review*, requires that annual emissions be brought down to a level that the Earth can absorb without adding to the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. In order to stabilize emissions at or below 550 parts per million (ppm) CO<sub>2</sub>, global emissions would have to be reduced to below 25 percent of current levels by 2050. The costs of stabilizing emissions at 500 to 550 ppm of CO<sub>2</sub>e would be around 1 percent of global GDP by 2050. It would require reducing demand for emission-intensive goods and services, increasing efficiency, which would save both money and emissions, switching to lower-carbon technologies for power, heat and transport, and taking action on non-energy emissions (avoiding deforestation, for example). However, delaying action would lead to greater climate change and higher costs later. Insufficient action in the next 10 to 20 years would put stabilization of emissions even at 550 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>e beyond reach.

Policies to reduce emissions would have to:

- establish a carbon price through taxation, trading or regulation in order to encourage and facilitate a shift to low-carbon goods and services;
- support the development of low-carbon and high-efficiency technologies, covering research and development, demonstration and early stage deployment; and

- remove barriers to behavioural change, addressing problems such as lack of reliable information, transaction costs, and behavioural and organizational inertia.

In addition, public measures will be required to deal with the unavoidable impact of climate change. International collective action and co-operation will be needed to establish shared global perspectives on the nature and urgency of the problem, the need for action, long-term goals and objectives dealing with the problem, multilateral frameworks and co-coordinated action, and accelerated technological innovation and diffusion that reduces the costs of necessary action.

### **3. Greenpeace energy [r]evolution (2007)**

Greenpeace's *energy [r]evolution—A Sustainable World Energy Outlook* was published by Greenpeace International and the European Renewable Energy Council (EREC) in January 2007, commissioned by the Department of Systems Analysis and Technical Assessment (Institute of Technical Thermodynamics) of the German Aerospace Centre (DLR). *Energy [r]evolution* develops a global sustainable energy pathway up to 2050 and presents a blueprint for meeting CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets and securing an affordable energy supply within the context of steady worldwide economic development.

*Energy [r]evolution* argues that there is a growing need for alternative energy, fuelled by the demand for energy security and the need to control growing pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Renewable energy and greater efficiency in the use of energy can secure half of the world's energy needs by 2050. It is economically possible to cut global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by almost 50 percent within the next 43 years. A large increase in renewable energy sources is technically possible. What is missing is the political will, the necessary political support. The causes of the ecological crisis and global warming are identified in the report as the way we produce and consume energy, burning primarily fossil fuels.

If we carry on business as usual, *energy [r]evolution* predicts that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will double by 2050 and global temperatures will rise by close to 2°C. Inaction will be more expensive in the long term than taking action now. Global climate change is disrupting ecosystems and causing unnecessary human deaths. An average 2 percent increase in global warming will threaten millions with increased risks of hunger, malaria, flooding and water shortages.

We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly, mainly CO<sub>2</sub> from the use of fossil fuel for energy and transport. But time is running out. Global climate change, caused by burning fossil fuels and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, will have disastrous consequences if left unchecked. The window for making the shift from fossil fuel to renewable energy is relatively narrow.

The solutions, according to *energy [r]evolution*, lie in greater energy efficiency and shifting to renewable energy resources. Renewable energy and the more efficient use of energy by 2050 can deliver half of global energy needs. Economically, it is possible to reduce global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the next 43 years by close to 50 percent, and the massive use of renewable energy is technologically possible. The only thing missing is the political will. Given the political will, renewable energy can provide up to 35 percent of world energy needs by 2030.

Through the use of renewable energy and greater energy efficiency, developed countries can stabilize their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and at the same time increase their energy consumption as a result of economic activity. They will be able to reduce emissions by close to 80 percent. Renewable energy sources, such as wind, biomass, photovoltaic, solar thermal, geothermal, ocean and hydroelectric power, are alternatives to fossil fuels. They are renewable and produce little, if any, CO<sub>2</sub>. Climate change requires changes in the way we produce, distribute and consume energy.

Measures that must be taken include:

- implementing renewable solutions, especially through decentralized energy systems;
- respecting the natural limits of the environment;
- phasing out dirty, unsustainable energy sources;
- creating greater equity in the use of resources; and
- decoupling economic growth from the consumption of fossil fuel.

By 2050, half of primary energy demand would be covered by renewable energy. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would decrease from 23 000 million tonnes in 2003 to 11 500 tonnes in 2050, and annual per capita emissions would drop from 4.0 tonnes to 1.3 tonnes. Political will would be required to phase out all subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear energy, to set legally binding targets for renewable energy, to provide defined and stable returns for investors, to give priority access to energy grids for renewable generators, and to ensure efficiency standards for all energy-consuming appliances, buildings and vehicles.

#### **4. IPCC Climate Change 2007**

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis* describes the state of knowledge about the human and natural drivers of climate change, observed climate change, climate processes and attribution, and estimates of projected future climate change. The IPCC, established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), assesses the scientific basis of risk of human-induced climate change, its potential impacts, and options for adaptation and mitigation. The IPCC does not carry out any research of its own, but assesses peer-reviewed and published scientific and technical literature. Its *First Assessment Report* was published in 1990. The last one, the *Third*

*Assessment Report*, was released in 2001. The current report is the first of four reports that will be published in 2007 as part of the IPCC's *Fourth Assessment Report*. This first report, from the IPCC's Working Group I, looks at the science of climate change. The subsequent reports look at impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; mitigation of climate change; and a synthesis report, combining the elements of the preceding three reports.

The report's findings indicate that it is very likely that human activities are causing global warming. Probable temperature rise by the end of the century will be between 1.8°C and 4°C. Possible temperature rise by the end of the century ranges between 1.1°C and 6.4°C. Sea levels are likely to rise by 28 cm to 43 cm. Arctic summer sea ice is likely to disappear in the second half of the century. It is very likely that parts of the world will see an increase in the number of heat waves, and climate change is likely to lead to an increased intensity of tropical storms.

The concentration of CO<sub>2</sub>, methane and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere has increased since 1750 as a result of human activity, and now exceeds pre-industrial values. The increase in CO<sub>2</sub> is due primarily to the use of fossil fuel and land-use changes, while the increase in methane and nitrous oxide is due primarily to agriculture. By 2005, CO<sub>2</sub> far exceeded the natural range over the last 650 000 years. The annual growth rate during the last 10 years was greater than it has been since the beginnings of continuous direct atmospheric measurements 1960–2005. There is a very high chance (90 percent) that, globally, the net effect of human activity since 1750 has been one of warming.

Increases in global average air and ocean temperatures have been observed, as have the widespread melting of snow and ice and rising global sea levels. Numerous long-term changes in climate have been noted—changes in arctic temperature and ice, widespread changes in precipitation amounts, ocean salinity, wind patterns and aspects of extreme weather, including droughts, heavy precipitation, heat waves and the intensity of tropical cyclones, hurricanes and typhoons. The warmth of the last half of the century surpassed anything experienced in at least the previous 1 300 years. Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century is very likely due to observed increases in anthropogenic (human-caused) greenhouse gas concentrations.

For the next two decades, a warming of about 0.2°C per decade is projected. Even if concentrations of all greenhouse gases and aerosols are kept constant at the year 2000 levels, further warming of about 0.1°C per decade is expected. Continued greenhouse gas emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These would very likely be larger than those observed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Anthropogenic warming and rises in sea level would continue for centuries even if greenhouse gas concentrations were to be stabilized, due to the time scale associated with climate processes and feedback. The IPCC's report

identifies the causes as human activities, including fossil fuel use, land-use changes and agriculture.

## 5. Conventional Measures Do Not Touch Fundamentals

The cited reports are by no means the only evidence of the conventional approach and measures. There are innumerable studies and reports demonstrating the conventional focus and approach, including the UN Human Development Report 2006, the UNEP Millennium Ecosystems Assessment Report 2005, and the annual UNEP Global Environmental Outlook, assessing progress on the Agenda 21 adopted at the Rio Summit in 1992 on Sustainable Development. In addition, there are a wide range of annual global, regional, national and local studies and reports regarding the environment. The cited reports are merely a representative sample of the conventional view and approach dealing with the ecological crisis and environmental problems we face around the world today.

**. . . the problems and challenges we face are more fundamental, substantial and deeper-rooted than we are prepared to recognize or is acknowledged . . .**

The focus of the reports is environmental symptoms and consequences, developments in the natural environment. The focus is not upon the human causes. The human causes are only mentioned in general terms—human activities, lifestyle, overconsumption, the model of economic development and economic growth, how we produce and use energy, over-reliance on fossil fuel, and so on. The causes are not understood in terms of how we understand and manage human existence and development, which is what lies behind, defines and governs them. There is no discussion about how and why we understand and manage human existence and development the way we do, limits and shortcomings, problematic results and consequences. What lies behind, defines and governs the human behaviour and actions that lead to environmental problems?

The fundamentals of how we understand and manage existence and development, what defines and governs our behaviour and actions, fundamental beliefs, views, values, conventions and practices, are taken to be sound and beyond question, not in need of consideration and discussion. The causes and the direction of the answers and solutions are taken to be self-evident and obvious, not in need of detailed and in-depth consideration and study. Only the means, the mechanics and steps—policy, legislative and regulatory measures and market incentives to bring about necessary scientific and technological development, investment and change in behaviour and action—are seen to be in need of consideration and discussion.

The answers and solutions are discussed only in terms of political, economic, scientific and technological terms, measures, steps, investments and developments. The answers and solutions are discussed in terms of the political,

economic, scientific and technological developments and investments taken to be necessary to bring about changes in lifestyle, in how we use natural resources, and how we do business and manage the economy—in terms of the policy, legislative and regulatory framework and market incentives required to develop a low-carbon economy, infrastructure and lifestyle.

The real problem and challenge presented in the reports is the lack of action and “political will.” To bring about the necessary action and generate the political will, the reports create crisis scenarios and try to generate a sense of urgency. To get beyond debate and arguments regarding the nature, causes, answers and solutions to the ecological crisis and environmental problems, the reports try to establish certainty about the symptoms and consequences, about developments and changes in the environment, designed to mobilize public support and pressure government and business to take the necessary action.

However, the problems and challenges we face are more fundamental, substantial and deeper-rooted than we are prepared to recognize or is acknowledged in the reports. The causes lie deeper—they are problems and developments in how we understand and manage human existence and development. The answers and solutions require long-term development and change to the way we understand and manage human existence and development.

The conventional approach, while necessary, is not sufficient to address the causes behind the ecological crisis and environmental problems we face. In managing the crisis, short- and medium-term measures dealing with environmental symptoms and consequences need to be adopted within the larger context of long-term development and change addressing the causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments. The conventional approach alone will only buy time for a path of development and a way of understanding and managing human existence and development that is not sustainable. It does not create the necessary conditions for a sustainable and secure future, the conditions necessary to understand and manage human existence and development in sustainable and secure ways, within the natural parameters. What is required is a change in the way we understand and manage human existence and development, correcting what lies behind, defines and governs them.

## **6. Fundamental Causes**

In short, the causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments behind the ecological crisis and environmental problems lie beyond lifestyle, overconsumption, the model of economic development and growth, how we produce and use energy, and reliance upon fossil fuel. They lie in how traditionally and today we understand and manage human existence and development. More fundamentally, they lie in what defines and governs how we understand and manage existence and development. They lie at the level of the

mind and mental existence, and how we understand and manage the mind, mental existence and mental development. We fail to establish the necessary internal mental conditions before acting, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others, the world around us and the natural environment.

How we understand and manage human existence and development, the mind and mental existence contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the natural conditions of existence, causing persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society and the natural environment. Specifically, we exploit and consume natural resources beyond actual human natural material needs, meeting non-material mental needs in material ways. We interfere with and degrade nature and the natural environment beyond what is necessary for human existence. We try to establish collectively in the world around us what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence. We try to establish the ideal external conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world of easy material abundance through managing, controlling, rearranging and directing nature and the natural environment.

**The way we understand and manage human existence and development . . . contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the natural conditions of existence . . .**

The answers and solutions require a change in how we understand and manage human existence and development, at the level and within the context of understanding and managing the mind, mental existence and mental development; understanding and managing the mind and mental existence as the place where consciously we exist and act, where we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do, from within the mind and mental existence, as reflected in individual experience. The answers and solutions require establishing individually the necessary internal mental conditions in everything we do and we engage in, before engaging and dealing with the world around us, with others, with nature and the natural environment; and not collectively creating the ideal external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world of easy material abundance around us.

## ***II. Deeper-Rooted Problems and Developments***

The causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments behind the ecological crisis and environmental problems lie in how we understand and manage human existence and development. More fundamentally, they lie in the way in which we understand and manage the mind, mental existence and mental development. How we understand and manage human existence and development contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, leading to persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society, the human species, and the natural environment.

### **1. Understanding and Managing Existence from the Top Down and from the Outside In**

We understand and manage human existence and development from the top down and from the outside in. They are understood from the human-created socio-cultural level down to the level of the natural conditions of existence. The focus is human-created socio-cultural conditions, beliefs, views, values, conventions and practices. They are taken to be reflections of the natural conditions of existence. We equate established socio-cultural conditions with the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence. The natural conditions of existence are understood through establish socio-cultural beliefs, views and values. Our behaviour and actions are guided and directed by established socio-cultural conventions and practices.

**We divide and separate an integrated and interacting world into different issues, subject matters, disciplines and fields of study, and different areas of human activity, specialization and expertise . . .**

We understand and manage existence and development from the level of the collective, the social, political, economic, scientific and technological level down to the individual.

Individual existence and development are considered and understood within the context of the existence and development of the larger collective whole, or society. The individual is understood to be part of a larger organic social collective whole, influenced and governed in its behaviour and actions by social, political, economic, scientific and technological conditions, forces and developments. We understand and manage our internal mental conditions, the mind and mental existence, through understanding and managing external conditions and the world around us. What takes place in the mind is taken to be governed to a large extent by external forces and conditions.

We understand and manage human existence and development in an externalized, fragmented, general, dissociated and disconnected way, in the abstract. The focus and concentration are external conditions and the world around us. We are preoccupied with external reality beyond the mind and mental

existence. The concern is primarily with the external physical world, physical behaviour and actions, understanding and managing external conditions and the world around us. We look externally for guides to behaviour and actions—external conditions, externally defined knowledge, institutions, values, conventions and practices, rules and regulations.

We divide and separate an integrated and interacting world into different subject matters, disciplines and fields of study, different areas of human activity, specialization and expertise, each defined and governed by different, competing and conflicting assumptions, objectives, approaches and practices.

Understanding and managing existence and development is divided into different and separate activities, such as public and private, personal and professional-occupational, mental and physical work and effort, pursuing, at times, conflicting aims, goals and objectives in public and private, personal and professional-occupational life. We deal with different but related and interacting elements and aspects of existence separately, in disconnected ways, treating them as separate and disconnected issues, considering, understanding and dealing with them in different ways, from within different frameworks, using different approaches.

Existence and development are understood and managed in general, in the aggregate, not individually, in depth and detail. Individual human existence, development and well-being are understood and defined within the context of the existence, development and well-being of the larger collective social whole--society. The primary focus is the existence and development of the larger collective whole. The existence and development of the individual is only considered and understood within the context of the existence and development of the larger collective social whole.

By focusing upon external conditions and the world around us, we ignore individual experience and the conditions of individual existence that lie behind our experience. We understand and manage existence and development dissociated and disconnected from individual experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind and are reflected in our experience. Dissociated and disconnected from our experience of them, we understand and manage our existence and development in the abstract. We understand and manage individual human existence and development within the context of human-created socio-cultural conditions, beliefs, views and values. We understand and manage existence and development at the level and within the context of human-created socio-cultural conditions and reality, not at the level of the natural conditions of existence, that lie behind and that are reflected in human experience, the experience of every human individual.

Specifically, we understand, manage and organize human existence and development in the collective. We conceptualize and understand the conditions of existence and the world around us in the abstract, beyond our experience of them. We create externally in the world around us what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence. And we understand and

manage human existence and development through understanding and managing the world around us.

## **2. Understanding, Managing and Organizing in the Collective**

We understand, manage and organize human existence and development in the collective, not individually in cooperation with each other. Existence and development are understood in terms of the existence and development of the larger social collective whole, or society. The individual is understood as a dependent part of the social collective whole, its role and responsibility defined by the collective. Individual understanding, behaviour and actions, choices and decisions, goals and objectives, relations and interactions are guided and directed by the larger collective. Individual human needs are understood and met within the context of meeting the needs of the collective. The social collective is seen to possess the natural human potential and accumulated human experience and knowledge, with the individual holding only a small part.

The demands and challenges of human existence and development are defined in terms of the demands and challenges of the larger collective social whole, divided into different human activities. Understanding and action, thought and practice, mental and physical work and effort are divided into different social positions, roles and functions. They are arranged hierarchically, with understanding, thought, mental work and effort taking place at the top of the social structure, and action, practice and physical work and effort, acting on established understanding taking place further down in the structure. Human social relations and interactions, in turn, are defined and governed by and take place within hierarchically structured social positions, roles and functions.

Understanding, organizing and managing human existence and development in the collective contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the natural conditions of existence. It conflicts with human beings mentally and physically existing independent of each other and of any larger organic-biological collective whole, while depending on and having to interact with each other and the natural environment in order to meet our natural needs. This leads to persisting and growing problems and difficulties, for the individual, society and the natural environment.

The results and consequences of understanding, organizing and managing existence in the collective include the development of strictly defined, rigid and inflexible social institutions, positions, roles and functions, rules and regulations; competition, conflict and confrontation within and between social collectives. It leads to competition, conflict and confrontation within collectives over shared resources, social positions, roles and functions, power and status, and between the individual and the collective over individual needs and collective demands, individual autonomy and collective authority, individual experience and

collective beliefs, views and values. Between collectives it leads to competition and confrontation over territory and resources, and about different beliefs, views, values and practices, different ways of understanding and managing human existence and development. The social consequences are domination, exploitation and deprivation, injustice, inequality, and the denial of individual needs, freedom and autonomy.

Understanding, organizing and managing existence in the collective, dividing the demands and challenges of human existence and development into different social positions, roles and functions, moreover leads to specialization beyond actual human needs, and the development of inappropriate and insufficient individual understanding, skills and practices. It leads to the development of the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to understand and manage existence within and contribute to the larger collective whole, and the failure to develop the understanding, skills and practices to understand and manage existence and development individually, in cooperation with each other, within the natural parameters, the natural conditions of existence.

The consequences are ignorance and alienation from the human self, from individual experience and the conditions of individual existence and development, which lie behind and are reflected in our experience; abrogating to others the role and responsibility in our existence and development that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage; abrogating to others the responsibility to deal with the demands and challenges of our existence and development that lie beyond our social position, role and function. Moreover, with increasing diversity in human activity, understanding, organizing and managing existence and development in the collective leads to the development of increasingly more complex and costly social institutions, social positions, roles and functions, making growing demands upon natural resources and the natural environment beyond natural human material needs.

### **3. Conceptualizing and Understanding in the Abstract**

We conceptualize and understand the conditions of existence and the world around us in the abstract, beyond our experience of them. We conceptualize and understand them without making sense of our experience, failing to consider the conditions that lie behind them in depth and detail. We must start with the self-evident in order to uncover the less obvious—what in our experience, perceptions, sensations and feelings do not impress themselves on our awareness. From this, we must deduce and conclude about the conditions of existence and the world that lie beyond human experience.

We look for knowledge and understanding externally, beyond the mind and our experience. We interpret and make sense of our experience through established socio-cultural beliefs, views and values, or we extrapolate and abstract from first impressions and instant awareness, from the self-evident and obvious in our

experience, extrapolating and abstracting from the perceptions, sensations and feelings that impress themselves upon our awareness. From this we create abstract images and conceptual structures in the mind about the conditions of existence and the world around us. We create mental images and conceptual structures that are not rooted in and do not reflect our experiences or the conditions that lie behind them.

This approach contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the nature of human understanding, consisting of mental images, pictures and conceptual structures and existing only in the human mind. Human experience, the only connection of the mind to the world beyond, provides the foundation and raw data of all human understanding. The results and consequences of this approach include failing to understand the conditions, demands and challenges of existence that lie behind and that are reflected in our experience, resulting in a disconnect between our experience and understanding, and between our understanding and the conditions of our existence.

The dire consequences are failing to understand the role of nature, which lies beyond our control, and the role and responsibility in our existence and development, which by nature are individually ours to understand and manage. Our behaviour and actions, choices and decisions, goals and objectives are defined, guided and directed by abstractly defined beliefs, views, values and conventions. They are not defined and governed by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence and our role and responsibility in them. They are defined and directed by beliefs, views and values not substantiated by our experience or the conditions of our existence. Moreover, our goals and objectives are not defined or limited by the natural conditions of existence, easily leading to conflict with the natural conditions of our existence, and interfering in nature and the natural environment beyond what is necessary.

The consequences include the development of different, competing and conflicting socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and practices about existence and development and how to understand and manage them. This opens the doors to conflict and confrontation over different beliefs, views, values, conventions and practices, different ways of understanding and managing existence and development. The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre, the war on terrorism, ethnic, racial and cultural conflicts and confrontations around the world today are the most recent examples of this.

#### **4. Creating Externally what we must Establish Internally in the Mind**

We try to create externally in the world around us, what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence. We try to establish a sense of self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty and security externally in the world around us, beyond the mind and

mental existence, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms. We fail to establish them in the mind and mental existence, where individually we are in charge and in control, through individual mental work and effort.

We define ourselves, our identity in terms of our social and professional-occupational position, role and function, power, possessions and wealth. We establish a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence through creating the ideal external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world around us. We establish a sense of certainty, security and confidence through the possession, control and accumulation of material-financial resources, goods and values.

This approach contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the role and responsibility in our existence and development that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage, establishing a sense of self, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty and security, where individually we are in charge and in control, in the mind and mental existence. The consequences are competition, conflict and confrontation over social positions, roles and functions, social status and power, and about material-financial resources, surplus, goods and values.

This approach leads to the development of structures of dependence, control, domination and exploitation, resistance to change and dealing with, responding and adjusting to changing conditions, demands and challenges only after they develop into larger problems and difficulties. The consequences are failure to individually establish the necessary internal mental conditions before acting, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us. This results in persisting and growing individual mental disorder and instability, doubt, confusion, uncertainty and insecurity, fear, stress, anxiety and frustration. It leads to acting out of doubt and confusion, mental disorder and instability, uncertainty and insecurity. Choices and decisions, aims, goals and objectives, behaviour and actions are defined and governed by doubt and confusion, fear and insecurity, not by clarity of mind and understanding, certainty and confidence.

This approach leads to demands upon the natural environment, exploiting and consuming natural resources beyond natural human needs, meeting non-material mental needs in material ways; interfering in nature and degrading the natural environment beyond what is required to understand and manage human existence; trying to establish externally in the world around us what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence.

## **5. Understanding, Managing and Improving the World Around Us**

We understand, manage and improve human existence and development through understanding, managing and improving the world around us; trying to create the ideal external conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world; trying to understand the self, our own existence and development through understanding the world around us, and improving our life and existence through improving external conditions.

We try to create the ideal external conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world of easy material abundance, rather than establishing the necessary conditions, where individually we are in charge and in control, in the mind and mental existence, before engaging and dealing with external conditions and the world around us. We try to create the ideal external conditions through managing, rearranging, controlling and directing nature and the natural environment, natural forces, processes, development and change, attempting to control irregular, non-uniform, non-recurrent and unpredictable natural development and change.

This approach contradicts and falls short of the natural conditions of existence, existing as part of the natural world that lies beyond human control, to which we must respond and adjust. The results and consequences include trying to understand and manage the role of nature, while failing to understand and manage the role and responsibility that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage. We fail to understand and manage existence and development where we are in charge and in control, individually in the mind and mental existence, within existing and changing external conditions.

In our attempts to manage the world around us and create the ideal external conditions, we see ourselves as the creators of the conditions of our own existence. We try to overcome and move beyond the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, looking for ways to move beyond the natural demands and challenges of existence, and eliminate the mental and physical work and effort that by nature are required to understand, manage and improve our existence. Through science and technology we try to overcome and move beyond the natural limits of human existence, and recreate the human self and the conditions of our existence.

In the process we develop an abstract, artificial, socio-cultural, political, economic-material and scientific-technological superstructure, which we try to superimpose upon the natural conditions of existence. Through managing, rearranging, controlling and directing natural forces, processes, development and change, we try to adjust and integrate nature and the natural environment into the socio-cultural superstructure. In the process we interfere in nature and degrade the natural environment beyond what is necessary in order to understand and manage human existence and development. This brings about

changes in natural development, which in the long term will render the natural environment of the Earth uninhabitable to the human species.

## **6. Failing to Understand and Manage the Mind and Mental Existence**

More fundamentally and more importantly, we fail to understand and manage the mind, mental existence and mental development. It is at the level of the mind and mental existence, and how we understand and manage them, that the essential causes of the ecological crisis and environmental problems are to be found. This is where, in the first instance, they need to be addressed and dealt with.

We fail to understand and manage where consciously we exist and act, where individually we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. We fail to establish the necessary internal mental conditions before acting, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, with the world around us, others and the natural environment. We fail to understand and manage what takes place, what we face and have to deal with, what we do and need to do, what we must establish and develop in the mind and mental existence. We fail to establish the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity, establish individual understanding about the conditions of our existence, and develop the natural human mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices.

Consciously, we exist and act in the mind and mental existence, as our experience and awareness of our own existence tell us. It is in the mind and mental existence that we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us. This is where we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. It is in the mind and mental existence where we make choices and decisions, where we define aims, goals and objectives, where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions. What takes place and what we do in the mind and mental existence defines and governs how we understand and manage our existence and development. It defines and governs how we deal with the self, how we understand and meet our needs, how we communicate and cooperate with each other, and how we relate and interact with the world around us, including the natural environment. It is in the mind and mental existence where problems and difficulties have their roots and beginnings, and where answers and solutions must start.

We exist in and as part of a constantly unfolding and changing world. To manage our existence and development we must interact with the world around us, within the context of constantly changing conditions, demands and challenges. This requires the establishment of clarity of mind and understanding, making sense of

our experience and considering the conditions that lie behind and that are reflected in it. From this, we establish clear and detailed images, pictures and conceptual structures in the mind about the conditions of existence, establishing the necessary internal mental conditions before acting, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the natural environment. This requires conscious and deliberate mental work and effort.

Traditionally, in religion and theist culture, the mind and mental existence are viewed as the human spirit or soul, understood to be the driving or animating force within living beings, our connection to a supernatural world and supernatural forces, which guide and direct us in our actions. This requires appeals and offerings to spirits and gods to guide and direct human behaviour and actions, choices and decisions, goals and objectives.

In the transition from religion and theist culture to science and scientific culture, with a questioning of the supernatural world, supernatural forces and causes, the mind and mental existence become redefined. The two-dimensional reality of the supernatural and the natural reality of theist culture are reduced to a single dimension: the physical-material world. The mind is viewed and understood as just another human organ. Similar to the human heart, brain, kidneys or lungs, the mind is seen to operate on its own, performing a specific function. The mind is viewed as an information-processing mechanism, translating information input from the external environment into internal instruction output. Human behaviour and actions are no longer seen as guided and directed by supernatural forces, but understood to be governed by either archetypal personality behaviour patterns, the neurological structure and working of the brain, or by our genetic make-up, influenced and conditioned to a degree by external conditions and factors.

Today we have yet to understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where we consciously exist and act. We have yet to understand and manage the mind, mental existence and mental development from within the mind and mental existence, as reflected in our experience of them. We fail to consider and understand the mind and mental existence in terms of what takes place, what we face and have to deal with, what we do and need to do, what we must establish, develop and maintain individually in the mind and mental existence.

We have yet to understand the nature, conditions, demands and challenges of the mind, mental existence and mental development, the mechanics and steps of how to understand and manage them. We need to understand the mind and mental existence as a reality that is real, but not material in nature, the place where, by nature, we are individually in charge and in control, where we have a role to play, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do.

We have yet to recognize and accept that what defines, guides and directs our behaviour and actions is what takes place and what we do, establish and develop in the mind and mental existence. This is where, in the first instance, we must understand and manage our existence and development. The mind and mental existence is where we need to understand and manage the role and responsibility in our existence and development, that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage.

Today we have yet to understand and meet our non-material mental needs in the mind and mental existence, through individual mental work and effort, instead of trying to meet them in material ways, beyond the mind and mental existence. We need to individually develop the conceptual foundation and mental capacity to understand and manage existence and development, existing in and as part of a constantly unfolding and changing natural world, within the natural parameters of existence set by nature. We need to individually develop, exercise and practice the necessary understanding, the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, and necessary mental skills and practices, and engage in the required mental work and effort. This development is made necessary today, more than ever before, by an expanding global human population and our growing ability through scientific and technological advances to interfere in nature and the natural environment.

The mental needs that we must meet in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort are: a sense of the human self; a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence; recognition and relevance; and communicating and interacting mentally and physically with other human beings. Briefly, establishing a sense of the human self—not our cultural, social, religious, professional or occupational identity— involves creating an image and picture in the mind about the human self. We consist of our mental and physical existence. Our mental existence is composed of what takes place and what individually we do, establish and develop in the mind and mental existence; our experience, the perceptions, sensations and feelings that enter the mind and awareness, how we deal with, respond and adjust to them; the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices we develop, on which we rely, how we develop and use them; the choices and decisions we make, and how we make them, the aims, goals and objectives we pursue, and how we define them; the behaviour and action in which we engage, and how we plan, organize and manage them; and how in the mind we deal with, respond and adjust to change and changing conditions. Having a sense of the human self is to have a clear and detailed mental picture about them.

Establishing a sense of order and stability in the mind involves considering and making sense of whatever enters the mind and awareness, experience, perceptions, sensations, feelings, recollections, thoughts and ideas. It involves ordering and arranging them in reasonable, meaningful, constructive and beneficial ways, mentally processing whatever comes to mind and enters our awareness.

Clarity of mind and understanding, establishing a sense of clarity and coherence, is to have clear and detailed images, pictures and conceptual structures in the mind about the conditions, demands and challenges of existence and development, problems and difficulties, jobs, tasks, plans, projects, goals and objectives; establishing in the mind clear and detailed images and pictures about what we face and have to deal with, what we do and what we engage in. It involves considering issues, conditions, demands and challenges, jobs, tasks and projects in their essence, in depth and in detail, in a differentiated but integrated, connected and related way; breaking them down into their parts, details and specifics; considering the parts, details and specifics, separately, at some length, in depth and detail, in an integrated, connected and related way; and visualizing them, connecting the details and specifics to form clear images and pictures about them in the mind.

Having a sense of certainty, security and confidence is to understand one's natural powers and abilities, skills and practices, and how to develop and use them. It is to be confident about one's ability to deal with whatever one is going to be confronted with, without knowing beforehand what it will entail. It requires being in charge, in control and taking responsibility for what takes place and what one does, establishes, develops and maintains in the mind and mental existence; dealing with doubt, confusion, uncertainty and insecurity, fear, stress, anxiety and frustration, and addressing the mental conditions that lie behind them. It requires considering, planning and organizing whatever one does and engages in, whether jobs, tasks, projects, goals and objectives, and dealing with, responding and adjusting to changing conditions, demands and challenges when only a minimum of mental work, effort and adjustment are required, and before they develop into larger problems and difficulties.

Meeting our need for recognition is to be recognized and acknowledged by others, confirming that we are a member of a species of human beings and that we do not exist alone in the world. Meeting our need for relevance is to give meaning and purpose to our existence beyond the self, beyond understanding and managing our existence and development just for their own sake. It involves contributing to the existence of others, meeting their needs, for which by nature we depend on and must interact with each other.

We must interact and communicate with others in order to meet the needs for which we depend upon each other, such as the need for recognition and relevance. We must interact mentally to confirm our sense and understanding of the self, the conditions of existence and the world around us. Physically we need to interact to confirm our physical existence and reality, and insure we do not exist alone. We need to interact, communicate and cooperate mentally and physically to manage individual and shared existence and development, and identify common ground, shared understanding, common goals and objectives and to coordinate actions.

Developing the necessary mental capacity involves developing the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities. The human natural mental potential, in its essence, consists of the power and ability to be mentally alert, active and engaged, to direct, focus and concentrate the mind and attention, to exercise mental discipline and mental flexibility, to visualize and create images and pictures in the mind, to reason, and to recall from memory.

To be mentally alert, active and engaged involves paying attention, recognizing, acknowledging and considering what takes place and what we do in the mind and mental existence; paying attention, recognizing, acknowledging and considering experience, perceptions, sensations and feelings that enter the mind and awareness; paying attention, recognizing, acknowledging and dealing with change and changing conditions, in our own individual mental and physical existence and development and in the world around us. Being mentally alert, active and engaged contrasts with being absent-minded, mentally passive and reactive; passively and aimlessly drifting through the mind, focusing and concentrating on abstractions, fantasies, idle speculation and wishful thinking; being preoccupied with disorder and instability, doubt and confusion, uncertainty and insecurity, fear, stress, anxiety and frustration; heading off to wherever our perceptions, sensations, feelings, thoughts, notions and ideas take us.

Directing, focusing and concentrating the mind and attention is a matter of paying attention to what one is doing and is engaged in, what one is confronted with and has to deal with; considering and dealing with conditions, demands and challenges, experience, perceptions, sensations and feelings, plans, projects, jobs and tasks. Directing, focusing and concentrating the mind and attention differs from not paying attention, being absent-minded, aimlessly drifting through the mind, following whatever comes to mind, constantly losing focus and direction, not paying attention to what one is doing or is engaged in.

Mental discipline involves keeping the mind and attention on what one is engaged in, whether a given issue, experience, job, task, plan, project or objective, and paying attention to what one does for as long as one does it. Mental flexibility is the ability to redirect one's attention, focus and concentration on demand, when required, directing, focusing and concentrating the mind and attention on a different issue, experience, condition, job or task. Mental discipline differs from not being able to keep the mind and attention, focus and concentration on a given issue or job for any length of time, easily losing focus, direction and concentration, heading off on unrelated tangents, getting lost in the mind and thought, and jumping to conclusions. Lack of mental flexibility is not being able to redirect the mind and attention, focus and concentration when necessary.

Visualizing in the mind means to form images and pictures in the mind about experience, the world around us, and what is described or communicated to us. It involves connecting the elements, details and specifics of our experience, what we read or is communicated to us, and the conclusions we draw from them.

Moreover, it is a matter of connecting mental images and pictures to form larger conceptual structures and create a conceptual framework about the conditions of existence and the world around us. Visualizing and forming images, pictures and conceptual structures in the mind differs from memorizing texts, language constructs, information details and specifics, expecting them to engage us and to create clear and detailed images and pictures on their own in our mind.

To reason is to consider issues systematically, consistently, step-by-step, at some length, in depth and detail, in a differentiated but integrated, connected and related way, and to recognize the picture that evolves, considering how the details and specifics connect, relate and interact. It is to consider issues in such a way that each step arises from the previous step and leads to the next step, considering issues in a way always to be able, at each point, to trace back one's steps to the beginning. It is to consider issues, starting with the self-evident, in order to uncover the less than obvious, to deduce and conclude from the given about the hidden—that which lies beyond human experience—without losing connection to the given. To reason is to create images, pictures and conceptual structures in the mind, systematically, consistently, step-by-step, making sure the elements, details and specifics are connected and related, systematically and consistently, in obvious and self-evident ways.

To reason differs from jumping from issue to issue, from experience to experience, connecting and relating elements, details and specifics in random, arbitrary and non-sensible ways; guessing and speculating about the less than self-evident and obvious, and what lies beyond our experience; getting ahead of oneself, ahead of the clarity of one's mind and understanding and jumping to conclusions. It differs from creating vague, ambiguous and internally inconsistent mental images, pictures and conceptual structures with little concern for details and specifics, and how they are related and connected.

To recall from memory is to recall past issues, experience, perceptions, sensations and feelings, mental images and pictures. It involves focusing and concentrating upon the past, past issues, conditions, demands and challenges, understanding choices and decisions, behaviour and actions, problems and difficulties, errors and mistakes. Recalling from memory in effective and efficient ways starts with mentally processing what enters the mind and awareness before it disappears into memory. Recalling from memory through focusing and concentrating on past issues differs from relying only on what comes to mind, without much mental work and effort.

Similar to our natural physical powers and abilities that we need to translate into physical skills and practices, we must translate our natural mental powers and abilities into necessary mental skills and practices. We need to translate them into the mental skills and practices required to understand and manage existence and development, existing in and as part of a constantly changing world, the mental skills and practices necessary to understand and manage, in the first

instance, the mind, mental existence and mental development, where we consciously exist and act, and where by nature we are in charge and in control.

We need to develop the mental skills and practices to consider and make sense of our experience, the perceptions, sensations and feelings that enter the mind and awareness, and the conditions that lie behind them. We need to develop the mental skills and practices to create images in the mind about the conditions, demands and challenges of existence and the world around us; to distinguish, differentiate between and understand the role of nature, which lies beyond our control, and the role and responsibility that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage; to make informed and considered choices and decisions, define necessary and appropriate aims, goals and objectives, and to plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions. We need to develop the mental skills and practices to meet our mental needs in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort; to establish the necessary internal mental conditions in everything we do and engage in, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us; and to deal with individual problems and difficulties, limits and shortcomings, errors and mistakes.

We need to develop the mental skills and practices to engage in a process of continuous, life-long conceptual and mental self-development and growth. This involves dealing with, responding and adjusting to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges, when only a minimum in mental work, effort and adjustment are required, and before they develop into larger problems and difficulties. It involves reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving individual understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, in light of change and changing conditions; reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving, whenever necessary and required, our understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, upon which we rely, and how we develop and use them; the choices and decisions we make and how we make them, the aims, goals and objectives we pursue and how we define them, the behaviour and actions in which we engage, and how we plan, organize and manage them.

### ***III. Results and Consequences***

Traditionally and today, how we understand and manage human existence and development contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence. The results and consequences are persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society and the natural environment, including the ecological crisis and environmental problems we face today.

Understanding, organizing and managing existence in the collective, as discussed above, contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of existing individually, mentally and physically independent of each other and of any larger organic social collective whole, while depending on and having to interact with each other and the natural environment to meet our needs. Conceptualizing and understanding the conditions of existence in the abstract, beyond our experience of them, we contradict, conflict with and fall short of the nature of human understanding, understanding existence only in the human mind, consisting of mental images, pictures and conceptual structures, derived from human experience. Trying to create externally in the world around us, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms, what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence, contradicts the natural conditions of human existence, consciously existing and acting, being in charge and in control individually in the mind and mental existence. Understanding and managing human existence and development through understanding and managing external conditions and the world around us, contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of existing in and as part of a constantly unfolding and changing world, which lies largely beyond our control, which we must accommodate and to which we must respond and adjust. It contradicts, conflicts with and falls short of understanding and managing the role and responsibility in our existence and development, that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage, within existing and changing external conditions.

Understanding and managing existence and development from the top down, from the human-created socio-cultural level down to the level of the natural conditions, contradicts and conflicts with the fact it is the natural conditions, not human-created socio-cultural conditions, which in the first instance define and govern human existence. Understanding and managing human existence and development from the social-collective whole down to the individual contradicts the fact that we exist individually, mentally and physically independent of any larger organic-biological social whole, as well as each other, while depending on and having to interact with each other and the natural environment in order to meet our natural needs. Understanding and managing internal mental conditions through understanding and managing the world around us contradicts the natural conditions of consciously existing and acting, experiencing and becoming aware of the conditions of existence and the world around us in the mind and mental existence.

Dividing and separating the conditions, demands and challenges of existence into different issues and subject areas of human activity, specialization and expertise contradicts the interconnected, related and interacting reality of our existence and the world around us. Dividing, separating, and hierarchically arranging understanding and action, thought and practice, mental and physical work and effort contradicts the interrelated nature of understanding and action, thought and practice, mental work and effort. It contradicts the fact that our behaviour and actions must be defined, guided and directed by our understanding, our practices need to be governed by thought, and physical work and effort must always be preceded, guided and directed by mental work and effort.

Failing to understand and manage the mind and mental existence contradicts the fact that we consciously exist and act, and we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do in the mind and mental existence. This contradicts the fact that we experience, become aware and must consider the conditions of existence in the mind and mental existence. It is in the mind and mental existence where we make choices and decisions, where we define goals and objectives, where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions. Failing to understand and manage the mind and mental existence contradicts the fact that our physical behaviour and actions are governed, defined, guided and directed by what takes place and what we do in the mind and mental existence. We must establish the necessary internal mental conditions and engage in the necessary mental work and effort before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the natural environment.

The results and consequences of contradicting, conflicting with and falling short of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence are errors and mistakes in understanding and managing our existence and development, in the choices and decisions we make, the goals and objectives we pursue, and the behaviour and actions in which we engage, how we plan, organize and manage them. The consequences are persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society, future generations, the human species and the natural environment, including the ecological crisis and environmental problems we are confronted with globally today.

## **1. Consequences for the Individual**

The consequences for the individual of how we understand and manage existence and development are problems and difficulties in understanding and managing individual existence and development, particularly understanding and managing the mind, mental existence and mental development. This leads to behaviour and actions with negative consequences for others and the natural environment, resulting in conflict and confrontation relating and interacting with others, demands upon the environment beyond actual human natural needs, and

interfering and degrading the natural environment beyond what is necessary in order to understand and manage human existence.

The more serious consequences for the individual are difficulties in understanding and managing the mind and mental existence, where consciously we exist and act, where we experience, become aware and must consider the conditions of our existence and the world around us; difficulties understanding and managing where individually we are in charge and in control, and where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do; and difficulties understanding, managing, and actively engaging where problems and difficulties have their roots and beginnings, and where answers and solutions must start.

The individual has difficulties understanding and managing what takes place, what we face and have to deal with, what we do and need to do, what we must establish, develop and maintain individually in the mind and mental existence. The individual has problems establishing the necessary internal mental conditions before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around it, which in turn affects how the individual deals with the self, relates and interacts with others, the larger world, and the natural environment. The individual has difficulties making sense of its experience, considering and understanding the conditions that lie behind and that are reflected in individual experience; difficulties understanding its mental needs and how to meet them, the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices, and how to develop and use them.

The results include failing to understand the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, and how to deal with, respond and adjust to them; failing to understand and differentiate between the role of nature, which lies beyond our control, which we must accept and accommodate and to which we must respond and adjust, and the role and responsibility in our existence and development, which by nature are individually ours to understand and manage. With understanding not rooted in, derived from or reflecting the conditions of existence that lie behind and that are reflected in individual experience, there is a disconnection between individual experience and understanding, and between understanding and reality.

The results and consequences include failing to establish a sense of self, a sense of order and stability, clarity of mind and understanding, a sense of certainty, security and confidence, where we are in charge and in control, individually in the mind and mental existence; difficulties dealing with mental disorder and instability, doubt and confusion, uncertainty and insecurity and addressing the mental conditions that lie behind them; lacking the conceptual foundation and framework, and the mental capacity to make choices and decisions, define goals and objectives, guide and direct individual behaviour and actions. This leads to fear, stress, anxiety and frustration in trying to make choices and decisions, defining goals and objectives, guiding and directing behaviour and actions

without the necessary conceptual framework and mental capacity. Defining goals and objectives beyond the natural parameters, beyond the role and responsibility in our existence and development that by nature is ours to understand and manage, we end up trying to manage the role of nature that lies beyond human control.

This leads to acting out of mental disorder and instability, doubt and confusion, uncertainty and insecurity, fear, stress, anxiety and frustration, resulting in errors and mistakes, creating problems and difficulties dealing with the self, others, the world around us, nature and the natural environment. These are errors and mistakes, problems and difficulties of which we are unaware, which we fail to recognize and understand, and for which we hold others—the world around us and higher authorities—responsible. As a result, errors and mistakes, problems and difficulties, limits and shortcomings are not dealt with and addressed at their roots and beginnings before they develop into larger problems and difficulties.

Problems and difficulties in understanding and managing the mind and mental existence result in focusing and concentrating on externalities; trying to establish a sense of self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence externally, beyond the mind and mental existence; looking for the ideal external conditions, trying to create an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world around us of ease and comfort. It means meeting mental needs externally in material ways, making demands upon the natural environment beyond actual human natural material needs, and interfering and degrading the natural environment beyond what is necessary and required to understand, manage and improve human existence.

## **2. Social Consequences**

The social consequences of how we understand and manage existence and development are problematic social relations, institutions and practices, with serious consequences for the natural environment. They include problems and difficulties relating and interacting, communicating and cooperating with each other, meeting the needs for which we depend on and must interact with each other, and managing shared existence; social institutions not designed to understand and manage human existence and development, existing in and as part of a constantly changing world, within the natural boundaries; social institutions not designed to understand and manage the role and responsibility in our existence and development that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage. They include problematic social practices such as dividing and separating the conditions of existence into different issues and areas of human activity and arranging them hierarchically, specialization beyond actual human needs, problematic scientific and technological development.

Social relations and interactions are defined and governed by established socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and conventions, and take place within the context of hierarchically structured social positions, roles and functions. Social relations and interactions are not defined and governed by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence. They are not defined by our dependence upon and need to interact with each other to meet some of our basic mental needs. The consequences are unmet mental needs, which we try to meet in material ways, in competition with each other, through the possession, control, accumulation and consumption of material resources and goods, making demands upon nature, natural resources and the natural environment beyond actual human natural material needs.

The results and consequences include competition, conflict and confrontation, within and between societies and cultures, over shared resources and about different beliefs, views, values and practices; competition, conflict and confrontation between societies and cultures about different ways of understanding and managing existence and development, different structures of identity, order and stability, certainty and security. This leads to domination, exploitation, deprivation and marginalization, injustice and inequality, poverty and starvation, ethnic, racial, gender and generational discrimination, conflict and confrontation.

The way we understand and manage human existence and development leads to social institutions not designed to understand and manage existence and development individually, in cooperation with each other; institutions that impede our understanding and management of the role and responsibility of our existence and development that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage. It leads to social institutions designed to understand, manage and organize human existence and development in the collective, to relate and interact, communicate and cooperate with each other within hierarchically structured social positions, roles and functions; institutions designed to support the demands and challenges of human-created socio-cultural conditions, how we culturally understand and manage existence and development, not in support of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence. It leads to social institutions that promote trying to manage the role of nature that lies beyond human control, to manage, rearrange, control and direct nature and the natural environment, institutions designed to create and maintain the ideal external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world of easy material abundance.

The results are the development of an artificial socio-cultural superstructure, which we superimpose upon nature and the natural environment, trying to integrate nature into the structure and its operating logic, trying to understand and manage the role of nature while failing to understand and manage our own natural role and responsibility. We view ourselves as the creators of the conditions of our own existence, further interfering in nature and the natural environment beyond what is required in order to understand and manage human

existence and development, in turn having difficulties dealing with, responding and adjusting to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges before they develop into larger problems and difficulties.

Problematic social practices arising from how we understand and manage human existence and development include dividing and separating an integrated, connected and related reality and conditions of existence into different issues and areas of human activities, which are organized and managed hierarchically from the top down. Different but related and connected conditions, demands and challenges, problems and difficulties are considered and addressed separately and in isolation from one another.

Human understanding and action, thought and practice, mental and physical work and effort are divided and separated into different, hierarchically structured social positions, roles and functions. Thought, mental work and understanding, required to guide and direct human physical behaviour and actions, take place at the top of the structure. Physical work, action and practice, acting on thought, mental work and understanding, take place lower down in the structure. The results are problems and difficulties, limits and shortcomings, errors and mistakes in thought, mental work and understanding, which are not experienced and addressed at the source where they are produced. They are acted upon repeatedly before they are detected or corrected, if they are detected or corrected at all, causing persisting and growing problems.

The consequences are existence and development are not understood and managed where they are experienced and lived, at the level of the individual. They are understood and managed in the abstract, at the level of the collective. Knowledge and understanding are not developed where they are used and acted upon. Errors and mistakes, limits and shortcomings in understanding, choices and decisions, goals and objectives, in planning and organizing are not detected and addressed where they are created. They are not considered and corrected when necessary and required.

A further consequence is the development of specialization beyond actual human needs, on the one hand, and the development of insufficient and inappropriate understanding, skills and practices on the other. We develop and specialize in the knowledge and skills, tools and methods to understand, manage and improve external conditions, to rearrange, control and direct nature, the natural environment, natural processes and development, while we fail to develop the understanding, the mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices to understand and manage our existence and development within existing and changing conditions, at the level of the natural conditions, within the limits set by nature.

Moreover, we develop the science and technology, the scientific knowledge and technological tools, methods and techniques to create an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world around us of easy material abundance, and we develop the

knowledge, tools, methods and techniques to manage, rearrange, control and direct nature, the natural environment, natural forces, processes and developments. This contrasts with developing the human understanding, natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices to understand and manage human existence and development within existing and changing external conditions, within the natural parameters, within the limits of our natural role and responsibility.

The problem is, nothing is defining, guiding and directing, limiting or controlling the development of scientific knowledge and technological tools or our use of them, but what we are capable of conceptually. And there are no limits to our conceptual capabilities, our ability to create abstract and idealized images in the mind of what the conditions of our existence should be. Scientific and technological developments are not governed, guided or constrained by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence and development. As a result, in understanding and managing existence and development, in dealing with demands and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions, we contradict, conflict with and fall short of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, causing growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society, future generations, the human species, nature and the natural environment.

The social consequences arising from the way we understand and manage human existence and development are structures of dependence, control, domination and exploitation. These structures lead to corruption, greed, exploitation, deprivation and marginalization in the name of the larger collective whole; lack of accountability, openness and responsibility, mismanagement, poor planning and organizing; human behaviour and actions, choices and decisions, goals and objectives not informed, guided or directed by the natural conditions of existence.

How we understand and manage existence and development leads to the development of ever larger, more complex and costly social institutions. Growing diversity in human activity, specialization and expertise leads to a proliferation in social positions, roles and functions, social institutions, rules and regulations, resulting in rising demand upon the natural environment for natural resources, with social institutions, processes and practices requiring ever greater material-financial resources. This adds to the exploitation and consumption of natural resources beyond actual human natural material needs, and interference in and degradation of the natural environment beyond what is necessary.

### **3. Consequences for the Natural Environment**

The consequences for the natural environment of how we understand and manage human existence and development, to summarize, are the exploitation and consumption of natural resources beyond what we actually need, and interfering in and degrading the natural environment beyond what is required to

understand and manage our existence and development. We exploit and consume natural material resources beyond natural human material needs, primarily through meeting non-material mental needs in material ways. Failing to understand and manage the mind and mental existence, we fail to meet our mental needs in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort. Instead, we meet them beyond the mind and mental existence through the accumulation, possession and consumption of material goods, values and wealth.

We interfere in and degrade the natural environment beyond what is necessary to manage and improve human existence and development, trying to externally establish in the world around us what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence, establishing a sense of self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, a sense of certainty, security and confidence externally in socio-cultural and physical-material terms. We collectively try to create the ideal external conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world of easy material abundance through managing, rearranging, controlling and directing the natural environment, natural forces, processes and developments instead of establishing individually the necessary internal mental conditions before engaging and dealing with the world around us, others and the natural environment.

The results are the ecological crisis and environmental problems we face today, such as global warming, pollution, loss of biodiversity, a shrinking ozone layer, soil erosion, the destruction of ecosystems, etc. The way we understand and manage human existence and development is causing changes in natural development and in the Earth's biosphere, which in the long term will render the natural environment of the Earth uninhabitable to the human species.

#### **4. Long-Term Development and Consequences**

The long-term consequences of how we understand and manage human existence and development are rising material consumption, growing demand on the natural environment and accelerated exploitation of natural resources, as well as growing socio-cultural conflict and confrontation. Rising material consumption, growing demand on the natural environment and the accelerated exploitation of natural resources come as the result of a breakdown of traditional external collective structures of identity, order and stability. This is leading to growing mental problems, the loss of a sense of self, a sense of order and stability, mental needs which will be met in material ways through the consumption of material goods and wealth, leading to rising material demands and expectations and the accelerated exploitation of natural resources beyond natural human material needs. This increase in material consumption is viewed as a "higher quality of life," a "higher living standard," which is aggressively promoted globally around the world as the only possible direction in human development, and the solution to all our problems.

In the developed world, the scientific-materialist cultures of Europe and North America we see the breakdown of traditional collective external structures of identity, order and stability. We witness a growing social crisis, the weakening and loss of traditional family and community structures, the breakdown of morals and ethics, traditional standards and guides to behaviour and actions. We witness the breaking down of traditional collective external structures of identity, order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence. The results are growing mental problems, mental disorder and instability, doubt and confusion, uncertainty and insecurity. The mental problems are addressed in material ways through the accumulation and consumption of material goods, values and wealth, leading to rising material demands and expectations, and an accelerated exploitation of the natural environment.

In countries and cultures where the modernization process is accelerating, such as in Asia, we see the beginnings of a loss of the traditional social fabric, the weakening of traditional values, institutions, structures and practices, family and community. We see the beginnings of the breakdown of traditional structures of identity, order and stability and a rise in material consumption, adding to the pressure on the natural environment. In countries and regions where the process of modernization is less pronounced and the weakening or loss of the traditional social fabric is less obvious, we see a more limited increase in material consumption, demands and expectations.

The breakdown of traditional external collective structures of identity, order and stability is also leading to growing socio-cultural conflict and confrontation. It is leading to conflict and confrontation over natural resources, and about different socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and conventions, different ways of understanding and managing human existence and development. The rise in religious fundamentalism, particularly Islamic, Christian and Jewish fundamentalism, the confrontation between religion and science, between creation and evolution, 9/11 and the current "war on terrorism" are the results and consequences of the breakdown of external collective structures of identity, order and stability. Socio-cultural communities more deeply rooted in traditional beliefs, views, values and conventions are resisting and opposing the global export of the "higher living standard" of scientific-materialist culture. The scientific-materialist way of understanding and managing human existence and development is seen as a threat to the traditional social fabric, traditional structures of identity, order and stability, certainty and security.

The scientific-materialist way of understanding and managing human existence and development is seen to threaten the traditional way of life, the established way of understanding and managing existence and development, established beliefs, values and conventions, about the nature, conditions, demands and challenges of existence, how to understand and deal with them. This is seen to lead to a weakening of established collective structures of identity, order and stability, rising social problems and problematic individual behaviour and

actions. Scientific-materialist culture and way of understanding and managing existence and development is taken to be the causes behind the problems of traditional cultures and ways of understanding and managing human existence and development, deflecting from their own inherent limits and shortcomings, problematic beliefs, values and institutions. The results are growing conflict and confrontation between different, competing and conflicting ways of understanding and managing human existence and development.

The causes behind the breakdown of the established social fabric, of traditional external collective structures of identity, order and stability are a number of factors. It is the result in the first instance of the natural human drive for individual independence, freedom, autonomy and sovereignty on the one hand, and resistance and opposition to authoritarian structures, practices, rules and regulations of domination and control on the other. It is a drive that is rooted in human mental and physical independent existence, a drive that can be observed and traced throughout human history. Moreover, the breakdown of traditional external collective structures of identity, order and stability is the result of growing individual economic, financial-material independence and self-sufficiency. This leads to decline in individual reliance upon traditional family and community structures, established socio-cultural values and conventions. Growing multiculturalism, cross-cultural interactions and communication, within and across societies, is an additional factor leading to a weakening and breaking down of traditional external socio-cultural structures of identity, order and stability. Communication and interactions across cultures challenge and undermine traditional socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and conventions.

The results of the breakdown of traditional external collective structures, and the weakening or loss of established socio-cultural morals, ethics, standards and guides to behaviour and actions are a loss of individual identity, sense of self, a loss of mental order and stability, clarity of mind and understanding, certainty, security and confidence, a loss of focus and direction to individual behaviour and actions. The consequences are growing mental problems and difficulties, mental disorder and instability, doubt and confusion, uncertainty and insecurity, fear, stress, anxiety and frustration, problems and difficulties making sense of individual experience and awareness, the conditions of individual existence and the world around us, which lie behind and which are reflected in individual experience. In turn, growing mental problems and difficulties are dealt with and addressed in material ways through the accumulation, possession and consumption of material-financial resources, goods and values. (In more severe and serious cases, growing mental problems and difficulties are dealt with in chemical-pharmacological ways, through pharmaceutical drug treatment.) The consequences are rising material-financial consumption, demands and expectation, leading to the accelerated exploitation of natural material resources beyond actual human natural material needs, and interference in and degradation of the natural environment beyond what is required for human existence.

The problem is that traditional external collective structures of identity, order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence as they break down are not replaced individually in the mind and mental existence. They are not replaced with individual mental work and effort where we are individually in charge and in control, considering and making sense of individual experience, awareness and the conditions of existence that lie behind and are reflected in individual experience. They are not replaced by individual internal mental structures because of a lack of necessary education and training, failing to develop in the individual the necessary understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices. Failing external collective structures are not replaced by individual internal structures in the mind and mental existence because of the limits and shortcomings of traditional education and training.

Traditional education and training do not develop in the individual the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity. They do not develop the essentials in understanding, the natural human mental potential, individual mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices. Traditionally education focuses upon socialization and training in established socio-cultural conditions, beliefs, views, values, conventions and practices, established ways of understanding and managing human existence and development. The focus is upon the knowledge and skills to understand, organize and manage existence in the collective; conceptualize and understand the conditions of existence in the abstract, beyond individual experience of them; establish a sense of self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence externally in the world around us, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms; and to understand, manage and improve human existence and development through understanding, managing and improving the world around us.

Traditional education and training do not develop, exercise and practice in the individual the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices to understand and manage the mind, mental existence and mental development, from within the mind and mental existence, as reflected in individual experience. They do not provide the understanding, mental powers, abilities, skills and practices to understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where consciously we exist and act, where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us, where individually we are in charge and in control, and where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. They do not provide the understanding, mental powers, abilities, skills and practices to establish and maintain a sense of self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity of mind and understanding, a sense of certainty and security in the mind and mental existence, through individual mental work and effort. Traditional education and training do not develop, exercise and practice in the individual the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices to establish the necessary internal mental conditions, in everything we do and we engage in, before acting, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us.

#### ***IV. Direction of the Answers and Solutions***

##### **1. Changing the Way we Understand and Manage Human Existence and Development**

The answers and solutions to the ecological crisis and environmental problems require more than managing crises, short and medium-term measures addressing symptoms and consequences. They require long-term development and change addressing the causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments. Specifically, the answers and solutions require changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development, developing the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity.

Addressing and moving beyond the ecological crisis and environmental problems requires understanding and managing existence and development from within a different conceptual framework, in a different way. It requires understanding and managing human existence and development from the inside out and from the ground up, not from the top down and from the outside in, as has traditionally been the case.

Existence and development need to be understood and managed from inside the mind and mental existence, beginning with the individual, individual mental existence and mental development. Not from the outside in, understanding and managing the mind and mental existence through understanding and managing the world around us. Consciously we exist and act, experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence in the mind and mental existence, and we need to understand and manage existence and development from the inside out.

Existence and development need to be understood and managed at the level of the natural conditions of existence, not from the human-created socio-cultural level down. They need to be understood and managed at the level of the natural conditions of existence, common to all human beings, which in the first instance define and govern human existence and development, the natural conditions of existence that lie behind and that are reflected in human experience, the experience of every human individual.

Moreover, existence and development, demands and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions, everything in life we face and we have to deal with, need to be understood and managed in their essence, in depth and detail, in a holistic, differentiated but integrated, connected and related way. Not, as is traditionally the case, understanding and managing them in general, in a fragmented way, dividing and separating everything, and dealing with them in different ways.

Specifically, we need to understand, organize and manage existence and development individually, in cooperation with each other, not in the collective. We exist individually, mentally and physically independent of each other and of any larger social-biological collective whole, while depending upon and having to interact with each other and the world around us in order to meet our basic needs. We must conceptualize and understand the conditions of existence and the world around us, not in the abstract, but through considering and making sense of our experience of them. Our experience, the perceptions, sensations and feelings that enter the mind, are our only access to the conditions beyond the mind and mental existence.

We need to establish and maintain a sense of the human self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence individually in the mind and mental existence, not establishing them collectively and externally in the world around us in socio-cultural and physical-material terms. We are individually in charge and in control in the mind and mental existence, not in the world around us. Moreover, we must understand, manage and improve our existence and development within existing and changing external conditions, not through managing and improving the world around us, trying to create the ideal external conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world. We exist in and as part of a constantly changing natural world, which we must accommodate and to which we must respond and adjust.

In the first instance we need to understand and manage existence and development at the level and within the context of understanding and managing the mind, mental existence and mental development. It is in the mind and mental existence where we consciously exist and act, where we are in charge and in control, and where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. This is where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence, where we make choices and decisions, define goals and objectives, plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions. It is in the mind and mental existence where first we must understand and manage our existence and development, beginning with understanding and managing the mind, mental existence and mental development.

We must understand and manage the mind, mental existence and mental development from within the mind and mental existence, as reflected in individual experience, establishing the necessary internal mental conditions in everything we do and we engage in, before acting, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us. We must consider and make sense of our experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind and that are reflected in them; meet our mental needs through individual mental work and effort; establish and maintain a sense of the human self, a sense of order and stability, clarity of mind and understanding, a sense of certainty, security and confidence in the mind and mental existence. We must deal with mental disorder and instability, doubt and confusion, uncertainty and insecurity, fear, stress, anxiety and frustration through addressing the mental conditions

that lie behind them. We must deal with, respond and adjust in the mind and mental existence to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges, when only a minimum of mental work, effort and adjustment are required, and before they develop into larger problems and difficulties. We need to be in charge, in control, and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do, what we establish, develop and maintain in the mind and mental existence.

We must develop the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity, establishing an understanding, images, pictures and conceptual structures about the conditions of existence, our own mental and physical existence and development, and that of the world around us; develop, exercise and practice the natural human mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices, required mental work and effort. We need to engage in a process of continuous, life-long conceptual and mental self-development and growth, constantly reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving our individual understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, mental work and effort, in light of change and changing conditions; reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving, whenever necessary and required, the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, mental work and effort we develop and on which we rely, how we develop and use them. We must reconsider the choices and decisions we make and how we make them, the goals and objectives we pursue, and how we define them, the behaviour and actions in which we engage, and how we plan, organize and manage them.

To address and move beyond the ecological crisis and environmental problems we need to establish the necessary internal mental conditions, the conceptual foundation and mental capacity, to understand and manage human existence and development in ways that do not contradict, conflict with or fall short of the natural conditions of existence. We need to establish the necessary internal mental conditions for a sustainable and secure future, to understand and manage human existence and development in sustainable and secure ways; to reduce our impact on the natural environment through reducing our material consumption to the level of actual human natural material needs; and reducing our interference in nature and the natural environment to the level of what is necessary and required to manage existence and development within existing and changing conditions, within the natural parameters, within our role and responsibility defined by nature.

This requires the establishment of the necessary internal mental conditions, the conceptual foundation and mental capacity to understand and manage the individual self, and to reduce individual impact upon the natural environment. We need to understand, deal with, correct and move beyond individual problems and difficulties, limits and shortcomings, errors and mistakes; meet non-material mental needs in non-material ways in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort, not meet them in material ways through the accumulation and consumption of material resources and goods. We need to

establish a sense of the human self, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence individually in the mind and mental existence, not creating them collectively and externally in the world around us in socio-cultural and physical-material terms.

We must establish the necessary internal mental conditions, the conceptual foundation and mental capacity to reduce social competition, conflict and confrontation; to communicate, interact and cooperate with each other beyond socio-cultural differences, at the level of the natural conditions of existence that are common to all human beings; and communicate, interact and cooperate with each other in order to meet the needs for which by nature we depend on and must interact with each other. We must establish the necessary internal mental conditions in order not to compete and conflict about the control, accumulation and consumption of material resources, goods, values and wealth, nor compete and conflict about different socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and practices, different ways of understanding and managing existence and development. We need to establish a shared conceptual foundation about the conditions, demands and challenges of existence and development that are common to all of us, to relate and interact, communicate and cooperate at the level of the natural conditions of existence that lie behind and are reflected in the experience of every human being.

There are different but related and interacting levels of reality and development. There is the natural level, the level of the natural conditions of existence. Then there is the level of the human-created socio-cultural conditions and development. Beyond these two external levels, there is the internal level, the level of the mind, mental existence and mental development, the level of what takes place and what we do, establish and develop in the mind and mental existence.

In the first instance, the natural world, the natural conditions define and govern human existence and development. We exist in and as part of the natural world. The natural world and natural conditions of existence lie beyond human control. Although through our behaviour and actions we can impact upon the natural environment. The socio-cultural reality, conditions and developments are what we create. They consist of human-created beliefs, views, values and conventions, social relations, institutions and practices.

The internal reality of existence consists of the mind and mental existence. It is where we consciously exist and act, where individually we are in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. It is where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us, creating mental images, pictures and larger conceptual structures about them. It is where we make choices and decisions, define goals and objectives, plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions, within the context of the mental images, pictures and larger conceptual structures we create in the mind.

The mental constructs, images, pictures and larger conceptual structures we create in the mind about the conditions of existence are translated into socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and conventions, social institutions and practices, collective rules and regulations. In turn, we let them define and govern our choices and decisions, our goals and objectives, our behaviour and actions, how we deal with the individual self, how we relate and interact with others, the world around us, with nature and the natural environment.

The extent to which our mental constructs, mental images, pictures and larger conceptual structures reflect our experience and the conditions of existence and the world around us, we have an accurate understanding of them, and we are able to manage our existence and development within the natural parameters, or we contradict, conflict with and fall short of the natural conditions. If we contradict, conflict with and fall short of the natural conditions of existence we are bound to impact negatively upon the world around us and the natural environment. Persisting and growing negative impact upon the natural environment may lead to changes in natural development, which in the long term may render the natural environment uninhabitable for the human species.

To address any negative impact upon the natural environment and natural development we need to correct and change our mental constructs, the images, pictures and conceptual constructs we create in the mind and mental existence. More fundamentally, we need to change how we make sense of our experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind and are reflected in them. In turn, this will change our socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and conventions, social institutions and practices, rules and regulations, our choices and decisions, our goals and objectives, our behaviour and actions, how we plan, organize and manage them. It will change how we deal with the individual self, how we communicate and cooperate with each other, and how we relate and interact with the world around us, with nature and the natural environment.

The point is the ecological crisis and environmental problems cannot be addressed directly. They can be address only indirectly, through addressing the causes, how we understand and manage the mind and mental existence, through correcting and changing how we consider and make sense of our experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind them, and the images, pictures and conceptual structures we create about them in the mind and mental existence.

## **2. Conventional Measures Necessary but Insufficient**

While the conventional measures to manage crises and address the environmental symptoms and consequences discussed in the cited reports are necessary, they are insufficient. They are only band-aid solutions. They need to take place within the larger context of long-term development and change addressing the causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments that lie behind

the ecological crisis and environmental problems. They are necessary to provide the time required to change how we understand and manage human existence and development, and to develop the necessary conceptual foundations and mental capacity.

The development of low-carbon technology, economy and infrastructure, policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and market incentives needs to take place within the context of changing the way we understand and manage existence and development. On their own, they do not address or move us beyond the real problems we face. They do not address the limits and shortcomings of how we understand and manage human existence and development, what lies behind and governs them. They do not address, change or correct the beliefs, views, values and conventions that lie behind, define and govern the understanding and management of human existence and development, and if they do it is in ways that contradict, conflict with and fall short of the natural conditions of existence. Managing the ecological crisis through addressing environmental symptoms and consequences does not create the necessary conditions for a sustainable and secure future. It does not create the conditions necessary to understand and manage human existence and development in sustainable and secure ways, within the natural parameters, without contradicting, conflicting with or falling short of the natural conditions of existence.

Without long-term development and change addressing the causes, deeper-rooted problems and developments, the proposed measures amount to little more than trying to sustain what is unsustainable. It amounts to a futile attempt to maintain established socio-cultural conditions, values and practices regardless of their limits, shortcomings, problematic results and consequences, without changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development, nor developing the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity. Managing the ecological crisis and addressing environmental symptoms and consequences will not solve the problems we face.

The proposed measures will not reduce human material consumption to the level of actual human natural material needs. They will not lead to meeting non-material mental needs in non-material ways through individual mental work and effort. The proposed measures will not reduce human interference in and degradation of the natural environment to the level of the necessary and required. They will not lead to establishing what by nature we must establish individually in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort. We need to establish a sense of self, an identity, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty and security individually in the mind and mental existence, not to collectively try to create them externally in the world around us by trying to create the ideal external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world of easy material abundance.

The proposed measures need to take place within the context of long-term development and change in order to ensure that we do not just buy time for an unsustainable way of understanding and managing existence and development, only to be confronted later with the same problems and difficulties but with less time to resolve them. We need to ensure the unresolved causes do not create further and greater problems and difficulties down the road. Addressing the problems at the socio-cultural level, while in the mind and mental existence at the level of the individual continuing to create the causes that lie behind them, will not resolve the issues. Leaving the causes untouched, we will continue to create similar problems and difficulties.

It is not enough to understand what developments and changes we cause in the environment, and the nature, structure and workings of ecological systems. It is more important to understand why we cause the developments and changes we bring about in the natural environment. That is, we must consider why we understand and manage human existence and development in the way that we do. More fundamentally, we must consider how we understand and manage the mind and mental existence, where how we understand and manage existence and development are defined and governed; how we understand and manage where we consciously exist and act, where we are in charge and in control; where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us, where we make choices and decisions, where we define aims, goals and objectives, where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do.

If we are to deal with the environmental problems we create, we cannot limit ourselves to only consider the results and consequences of our behaviour and actions. We need to address the causes at the level where behaviour and actions are defined and governed—in the mind and mental existence. They need to be dealt with through addressing the underlying causes, problems and developments that give rise to them.

The proposed measures need to take place within the context of long-term development and change in order to move beyond the traditional approach of managing crises, which ignores change, changing conditions, demands and challenges until they develop into larger problems and difficulties. The conceptual foundation and mental capacity must be developed in order to deal with, respond and adjust to change and changing conditions before they develop into larger problems and difficulties, before they develop into crises that force us into action.

It is essential to engage individually in a process of continuous, life-long conceptual and mental self-development and growth, dealing with, responding and adjusting to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges when only a minimum in mental work, effort and adjustment are required, and before they develop into larger problems and difficulties. This involves constantly

reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving individual understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, mental work and effort in light of change and changing conditions; reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving, whenever necessary and required, the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, mental work and effort which we develop and upon which we rely, and how we develop and use them. We must continually reconsider and evaluate the choices and decisions we make, how we make them, the aims, goals and objectives we pursue, how we define them, the behaviour, action and practices in which we engage, and how we plan, organize and manage them.

The proposed short- and medium-term measures need to take place within the larger context of long-term development and change, changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development, in order to treat the natural environment as the centre and foundation of existence. This means not treating the natural environment merely as an add-on, as just another factor in socio-cultural, political, social, economic, scientific and technological policy and development, as is the case today. That is, understanding and managing socio-cultural conditions and development at the level and within the context of the natural conditions of existence, not understanding nature and the natural environment, natural forces and processes, natural development and change within the context of human-created socio-cultural conditions and development.

In order to deal with the ecological crisis and environmental problems, and for short and medium-term measures to take place within the larger context of long-term development and change addressing the causes, the process must start today. We need to start immediately the process of long-term development and change, changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development. The process cannot wait until it is forced upon us, when we no longer have a choice, by which time it might be too late. We may no longer have the time for the generations it will take to bring about the required changes in the way we understand and manage existence and development, to develop the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity.

### **3. Understanding and Managing Existence and Development from within a Different Conceptual Framework**

The answers and solutions to the ecological crisis and environmental problems require understanding and managing human existence and development from within a different conceptual framework, dealing with the human self, interacting and cooperating with each other, relating and interacting with the world around us and with the natural environment, from within a different view and understanding of the conditions, demands and challenges of human existence and development. It requires understanding not only the structure and workings of nature and the natural universe, and human-created socio-cultural conditions,

but the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence that lie behind and are reflected in human experience.

It requires a conceptual framework that differentiates between nature and natural universe, and the natural conditions of human existence and development. There is a difference between the unfolding structure and workings of the natural universe, and the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence. To manage our existence and development we need to understand and deal with the conditions, demands and challenges of existence that lie behind and are reflected in our experience. Knowledge of the structure, workings and unfolding of the natural universe is insufficient to manage human existence and to understand and deal with the conditions of our existence. It does not provide us with an understanding of the conditions, demands and challenges of our existence, or how to manage and deal with them.

It requires a conceptual framework that differentiates between human physical-biological and conscious-mental existence. Knowledge of the structure, workings and unfolding of our physical-biological existence does not provide us with the information required to understand and manage our conscious-mental existence. It does not give us an understanding of what takes place, what we face and have to deal with, what we do and need to do, what we must establish, develop and maintain in the mind and mental existence. It does not provide us with the understanding and skills necessary to understand and manage where we consciously exist and act, where we are in charge and in control, where we must be actively engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. It does not enable us to establish and maintain the necessary internal mental conditions before engaging and dealing with external conditions and the world around us.

Moreover, we need a conceptual framework that distinguishes and differentiates between nature and culture, between the natural and human-created conditions of existence. We need to distinguish and differentiate between what lies beyond our control and what we engineer. We need to understand the role of nature, which lies beyond our control, which we must accept and accommodate, and to which we must respond and adjust. And we need to understand our role and responsibility in our existence and development, that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage, where we are in charge and in control.

When human-created socio-cultural conditions, beliefs, views, values and conventions, social institutions and practices that we engineer do not reflect our experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind them, we are likely to contradict, conflict with or fall short of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, causing problems and difficulties for the individual, others, society, the world around us, for nature and the natural environment. To avoid causing persisting and growing problems and difficulties, our beliefs, views, values and conventions, institutions and practices need to reflect and be defined by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence. They need to be

linked, rooted in, arise out of, respond and adjust to our experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind them. This requires an understanding and management of existence and development, demands and challenges, change and changing conditions at the level of the natural conditions, which in the first instance define and govern existence and development, that lie behind and are reflected in human experience, the experience of every human individual.

Human existence and development, in their essence, are not a socio-cultural engineering project. Managing our existence and development is not a question of creating the ideal external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions. Trying to create the ideal external conditions is part of the problem. Human existence, in its essence, consists of unfolding, changing and transforming natural forces, processes, development and change, within which, by nature, we have an active role to play. Managing existence and development is a matter of understanding and managing the role and responsibility in our existence and development, that by nature are individually ours to understand. This means meeting our needs, both mental and physical, in necessary ways, at the appropriate time, within the natural parameters; meeting our non-material mental needs in non-material ways, in the mind and mental existence, through individual mental work and effort, and meeting our physical needs in material ways, through interacting with the natural environment. We must deal with, respond and adjust to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges, in our own mental and physical existence and development and in the world around us, before they develop into larger problems and difficulties. Understanding and managing existence and development requires understanding and managing the role and responsibility of our existence and development, that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage within the natural parameters without contradicting, conflicting with or falling short of the natural conditions of existence.

Within this context, the answers and solutions to the ecological crisis and environmental problems do not lie in scientific and technological development, but rather lie in conceptual and mental development and growth. They do not lie in developing the knowledge and tools to create the ideal external conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world of easy material abundance, nor in a better, more detailed and in-depth knowledge and understanding of the structure and workings of nature and the natural environment, nor developing the technological tools to manage, rearrange, control and direct nature and the natural environment, natural forces and processes. The answers and solutions require human conceptual and mental development and growth, individually developing, exercising and practicing the understanding, the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, the mental skills and practices, the mental work and effort to understand and manage human existence and development within existing and changing conditions. We need to deal with, respond and adjust to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges when only a minimum in mental work, effort and adjustment are required, and before they develop into larger problems, difficulties and crises.

There is a difference between the scientific and technological challenge of reducing environmental symptoms, results and consequences, and the conceptual and mental challenge of changing how we understand and manage existence and development. Developing the knowledge and tools to reduce the impact on the environment through how we understand and manage existence and development is one thing; it is something quite different to develop the understanding, natural mental powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices, required mental work and effort to understand and manage existence and development within the natural parameters, without contradicting, conflicting with or falling short of the natural conditions of existence. It is essential to understand and manage the role and responsibility of our existence and development, that by nature are ours to understand and manage, where we are in charge and in control, not trying to manage the role of nature that lies beyond our control.

The answers and solutions require change in the purpose, focus and direction of scientific and technological development. This means developing not the knowledge and tools to manage external conditions and the world around us, rearranging, controlling and directing nature and the natural environment, but developing the knowledge and tools to understand and manage existence and development, existing in and as part of a constantly unfolding, changing and transforming world within the limits set by nature.

The purpose, focus and direction of scientific and technological development are part of the problem behind the ecological crisis and environmental problems we face. Traditionally, the scientific and technological development of knowledge and tools are defined by the humanly possible, by what conceptually we are capable of. The problem is that there are no limits or constraints to what we can conceptualize, the images and visions we can create in the mind and mental existence. We are able to create mental images and pictures that lie well beyond the role and responsibility in our existence and development set by nature. Trying to realize such mental images and pictures contradicts and conflicts with the natural conditions of existence, leading to problematic consequences for the individual, society and the natural environment.

Scientific and technological development are not defined, guided and directed by the need to understand and manage existence and development, existing in and as part of a constantly unfolding and transforming natural world, within the natural parameters. To deal with the ecological crisis and environmental problems, addressing the causes that lie behind them, scientific and technological development need to be informed, guided and directed by the natural conditions of existence. They need to provide the knowledge, understanding and tools to assist and support understanding and managing the role and responsibility of our existence and development, that by nature are individually ours to understand and manage, not to understand and manage the role of nature that lies beyond our control.

#### **4. Changing Focus from Managing the Economy to Managing Human Existence**

Changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development requires a change in focus from managing the economy to understanding and managing human existence and development. The economy and economic activity are concerned only with one aspect of human existence: providing the means to meet our material needs. They do not deal with the more fundamental, non-material side of our existence—the mind, mental existence and mental development—where we consciously exist and act.

The economy and economic activity do not deal with understanding and managing the mind and mental existence, considering and making sense of our experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind them. They do not meet mental needs in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort, nor do they establish a sense of the human self, a sense of order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty, security and confidence in the mind and mental existence. They do not deal with, respond or adjust the mind and mental existence to change and changing conditions before they develop into larger problems and difficulties, nor do they establish the necessary internal mental conditions before engaging and dealing with external conditions and the world around us.

Meeting our material needs must take place within the larger context of understanding and managing human existence and development, particularly and in the first instance understanding and managing the mind and mental existence. We must not, as is the case today, understand and manage existence and development within the context of managing the economy and economic activity.

In their essence, the causes behind the ecological crisis and environmental problems are not of an economic nature, about how we meet our material needs. They are problems and difficulties of how we understand and manage our existence and development. The causes, answers and solutions lie beyond how we meet our material needs and produce material goods and wealth. While there is a need to shift to a low-carbon economy and infrastructure, such a shift alone will not address the limits and shortcomings, problematic results and consequences of how we understand and manage existence and development.

In order to address the causes behind the ecological crisis and environmental problems we need to reduce our material consumption to the level of actual human natural material needs. This requires meeting our mental needs in non-material ways, through individual mental work and effort. We must reduce interference in the natural environment to the level of what is necessary and required in order to understand and manage existence and development within existing and changing conditions, within natural parameters. This requires the establishment of structures of identity, order and stability, clarity and coherence,

certainty, security and confidence in the mind and mental existence, where we are individually in charge and in control. It does not mean establishing them collectively and externally in socio-cultural and physical-material terms, but establishing individually the necessary internal mental conditions in everything we do and engage in before engaging and dealing with external conditions and the world around us. This does not mean creating the ideal external conditions through managing, rearranging, controlling and directing nature and the natural environment.

As argued in the WWF report, the question of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is how can we live well within the means of one planet? However, the question is not to be understood in socio-cultural, political, economic, material-financial terms, or in terms of external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions. It is to be understood in the first instance in mental terms, at the level of the mind and mental existence. The question is, how to improve existence and development through improving mental existence and mental development, improving how we understand and manage the mind and mental existence.

Improving human existence and addressing problems and difficulties must begin at the level of the mind and mental existence. It must start with improving mental existence and mental development, improving how we understand and manage the mind, mental existence and mental development; establishing the necessary internal mental conditions before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us, in everything we do and we engage in; not looking for the ideal external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions.

It involves understanding and managing, being in charge, in control, actively engaging and taking responsibility for what takes place, what we face and have to deal with, what we do and need to do, what we must establish, develop and maintain individually in the mind and mental existence; meeting our mental needs in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort; and developing, exercising and individually practicing the necessary understanding, the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, necessary and appropriate mental skills and practices, and the required mental work and effort.

The solutions to changing how we understand and manage human existence and development do not lie in macro-managing the economy and socio-cultural development from a level higher up, at the international or global level, macro-managing the socio-cultural and physical-material conditions at the global level, with the individual merely to be integrated into the established order. Instead, existence and development, demands and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions need to be understood and managed from the inside out and from the ground up, at the level of the individual, by every individual. In the first instance they need to be understood and managed at the level where human existence and development take place, where they are

experienced and lived, from the inside out, beginning with the mind and mental existence, where behaviour and actions take place, and where problems and difficulties have their roots and beginnings.

The answers and solutions do not lie, as argued in the *WWF Living Planet Report 2006*, in macro-managing global resources or in global resources allocation schemes. They do not lie in resource accounting and reporting, establishing baselines and setting targets, but rather lie in reducing the exploitation and consumption of natural resources and the interference in nature and the natural environment. Understanding and managing existence and development is not a business enterprise, of producing material goods and services, or generating material-financial surplus and profits. The answers and solutions require a reduction in human material consumption, at the level of the individual, to the level of actual human natural material needs, meeting non-material mental needs in the mind and mental existence through individual mental work and effort.

Reducing the human ecological footprint requires a reduction in interference in nature and the natural environment, at the level of the individual, to what is necessary in order to understand and manage human existence and development. It requires the establishment of structures of identity, order and stability, clarity and coherence, certainty and security in the mind and mental existence, where we are individually in charge and in control, not establishing them externally, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms. It requires understanding and managing existence and development within natural parameters, within the limits of our role and responsibility set by nature.

## **5. Understanding and Managing Existence at the Level of the Individual**

The problems we face need to be understood and addressed at the level of the individual, by every individual, not only in personal life but in all areas of human activity, in everything we do and we engage in, at every level and in all sectors of society. The problems need to be considered, understood and addressed at the level of the individual in public and private life, in government and business, in education and training, science and technology, in the economy, business and economic activity, as well as in personal life.

The problems, causes, answers and solutions need to be considered, understood and addressed at the level of the individual, not at the level of the collective, the socio-cultural level. It is at the level of the individual where behaviour and action take place, where problems and difficulties have their roots and beginnings, and where answers and solutions must start. What is required is not collective, but rather individual and cooperative action. That is not collective action, someone acting in the name or on behalf of the larger collective social whole, but individual and cooperative action, active individuals cooperating with each other.

The ecological crisis and environmental problems are the results and consequences of individual human behaviour and actions, problematic beliefs, views and values, choices and decisions, goals and objectives. They are developed, embraced, exercised and practiced at the level of the individual. They need to be addressed through individual action. The collective is nothing more than the sum of individual human beings acting and interacting.

Problems, causes and solutions need to be considered, understood and addressed where they take place, at the level where human behaviour and actions are managed, where choices and decisions are made, where goals and objectives are defined, where ways of understanding and managing existence and development are acted out. That is, the ecological crisis and environmental problems, the causes, problems and developments that lie behind and account for them, the answers and solutions need to be considered and understood at the level of the individual. They need to be considered and understood in terms of what individually we do and need to do, what we must develop, what we need to change and correct in our behaviour, actions and practices, in our understanding, choices and decisions, in our goals and objectives. The answers and solutions require development and change at the level of the individual, by every individual.

The problems, causes and solutions need to be understood at the level of the individual in order to move beyond debate and take necessary action. They need to be understood and addressed at the level of the individual in order to provide will, commitment and determination from every individual to do what is required in everything we do and engage in, at every level and sector of society, in all areas of human activity. Considering, understanding and addressing the problems at the level of the collective only opens the door to never-ending debate and arguments about responsible parties, who caused the problems and who should address them. It leads to denying individual responsibility and rejecting the need for individual action.

## **6. Cultural Change and Transformation**

Changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development requires cultural change and transformation, cultural development and growth, at the level of the individual, by every culture, both in the developed and the developing world. It requires cultural change and transformation to understand and manage human existence and development from the inside out and from the ground up; individually to establish the necessary internal mental conditions in everything we do and engage in before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others and the world around us. Developing the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity at the level of the individual, individually developing, exercising and practicing the required understanding, the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices, and required mental work and effort.

Cultural change and transformation are required in order to understand and manage existence and development at the level and within the context of understanding and managing, in the first instance, the mind, mental existence and mental development, from within the mind and mental existence, as reflected in individual experience. They are required to move beyond different, competing and conflicting socio-cultural beliefs, views, values and practices, different ways of understanding and managing existence and development. Instead, understanding and managing existence and development, relating and interacting, communicating and cooperating with each other at the level of the natural conditions of existence, which in the first instance define and govern human existence and development, that are common to all human beings that lie behind and are reflected in the experience of every individual human being. Cultural change and transformation are required to understand and manage existence and development, demands and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions, in fact everything in life we face and have to deal with, in their essence, in depth and detail, in a holistic, differentiated but integrated, connected and related way.

Cultural change and transformation are required in order to relate and interact with nature and the natural environment in necessary ways, within natural parameters, within the limits of the role and responsibility of our existence and development set by nature. We need to reduce human exploitation and consumption of material resources to the level of actual human natural material needs, meet non-material mental needs in non-material ways through individual mental work and effort, reduce human interference in nature and the natural environment to the level of what is necessary and required to understand, manage and improve human existence, and not try to create externally in the world around us what by nature we must establish and maintain individually in the mind and mental existence.

Addressing the problems we face requires more than bringing cultures further back on the path of development to the point of development of western scientific culture. Dealing with global disparities, socio-cultural conflict and confrontation, the ecological crisis and environmental problems requires more than raising the rest of humanity to the level of education and living standard, the way of understanding and managing human existence and development of western culture. Western scientific-materialist culture is the leading edge of a path of development and a way of understanding and managing existence and development that is not sustainable, that is creating the problems and difficulties we face today.

## **7. Changing the Historical Path and Direction of Development**

What is required is changing the historical path and direction of human development. We need to change the path and direction of development, from understanding and managing human existence and development from the top down and from the outside in, to understanding and managing them from the inside out and from the ground up. It requires understanding and managing existence and development from inside the mind and mental existence, beginning with the individual, individual mental existence and mental development. Not understanding and managing existence and development from the outside in, understanding and managing external conditions and the world around us in order to understand and manage where we consciously exist and act—the mind and mental existence. Moreover, we need to understand and manage them at the level of the natural conditions of existence, not from the human-created socio-cultural level down.

The historical path and direction of human development, the way traditionally and today that we understand and manage existence and development, cannot be sustained. At best, we can buy time for this path of development, but we cannot continue it indefinitely. We cannot continue understanding and managing existence and development in the collective, from the top down and from the outside in. It is not possible to continue conceptualizing and understanding the conditions of existence in the abstract, beyond our experience of them. We cannot continue establishing externally in the world around us in socio-cultural and physical-material terms what by nature we must establish and maintain individually in the mind and mental existence. It is not possible to continue understanding and managing existence and development through understanding and managing, controlling and directing the world around us, trying to create the ideal external socio-cultural and physical-material conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world.

We cannot continue meeting non-material mental needs in material ways, consuming natural material resources beyond actual human natural material needs. We can no longer establish in the world around us what by nature we need to establish and maintain individually in the mind and mental existence, interfering in nature and the natural environment beyond what is necessary and required to understand and manage existence and development within the natural parameters, the boundaries and limits of existence set by nature.

The way traditionally and today we understand and manage human existence and development may have been possible in the past, with a smaller global human population, a less material lifestyle, culturally more homogeneous societies and communities, and stable external structures of identity, order and stability. With an expanding global human population, the growth of global interaction, multicultural societies, countries and communities, the breakdown of traditional external socio-cultural structures of identity, order and stability, and the

dissolution of collective guides to individual behaviour and actions and rising material consumption, the traditional way of understanding and managing human existence is no longer sustainable. It cannot be continued into the future without persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society, future generations, the human species, nature and the natural environment. It is leading to the accelerated exploitation and consumption of natural resources and growing interference in and degradation of the natural environment. The traditional way of understanding and managing human existence and development is taking us in the direction of rendering the natural environment of the Earth uninhabitable for the human species.

## **8. Taking the Next Step in Human Conceptual and Mental Development and Growth**

Changing the way we understand and manage human existence and development requires taking the next step in human conceptual and mental development and growth. We need to develop independence of mind and understanding, about the conditions of human existence and development, particularly about the mind, mental existence and mental development. It requires developing the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity at the level of the individual; individually developing, exercising and practicing the understanding, the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, to understand and manage human existence and development at the level of the natural conditions of existence that lie behind and are reflected in individual experience.

Human conceptual and mental development is a matter of establishing clarity of mind and understanding about the conditions of existence and developing the human natural mental faculties. It involves developing the conceptual foundation and the mental capacity required to understand and manage human existence and development. Human conceptual and mental development is driven by the need to make sense of our experience and understand the conditions of existence that lie behind and are reflected in human experience. It is driven by the need to make choices and decisions, define goals and objectives, guide and direct behaviour and actions meeting our needs in a constantly changing world.

Early human understanding consisted of myth, faith and beliefs, stories, chronological accounts of events and experience, fictions and mysterious tales about the conditions of existence of the collective, group, tribe or civilization. Understanding did not consist of clear and detailed mental images, pictures or larger conceptual structures about the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence, underlying forces and processes, causes and effects. The focus of understanding was the supernatural-spiritual world, thought to govern the physical world, including human beings, human behaviour and actions. The supernatural-spiritual world was taken to govern the hidden, the less obvious and self-evident in natural forces and processes that lie beyond human

experience and perceptions. The approach to understanding--considering and making sense of human experience and the conditions of existence that lie behind them--was random, arbitrary and speculative. It involved random speculation, unsystematic extrapolation and abstraction from the self-evident and obvious in human experience, which impressed itself upon human awareness without much mental work or effort, creating arbitrary and abstract mental images, pictures and larger conceptual constructs about the conditions of human existence and the world around them.

Around the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC Greek philosophers, in response to changing socio-cultural conditions, changes in social, political, economic and technological conditions, improvements in agriculture, surplus production, the development of urban existence and public administration, started to question established myths and supernatural explanations. The focus shifted from the supernatural-spiritual world to understanding the physical world, to understand natural forces, processes and laws governing the physical world. The concern was to improve human worldly existence through understanding the physical world and the natural forces, processes and laws that govern it, not through appeals to supernatural forces, spirits and gods. The approach to understanding became one of reason and rational inquiry and investigation, inquiring into the nature of things based on systematic investigation and reasoning rather than myth and superstition. However, reason, rationality and rational inquiry into the physical world and natural causes did not become the dominant approach to understanding the conditions of existence. The approach existed in parallel or as a part of the traditional approach of myth, faith and beliefs.

With the fall of the Western Roman Empire around the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC the approach of reason, rationality and the rational inquiry into the physical world and improving human worldly existence fell into decline. Greco-Roman culture, political, social and economic institutions declined, and trade, commerce and manufacturing collapsed. The Roman Empire fell into decentralized regions, local powers re-established themselves, and pagan myths and beliefs were reasserted, later to be integrated into or replaced by rising Christianity. The approach to human understanding reverted back to myth, faith and beliefs.

Christian philosophers in the High Middle Ages adopt the Greek approach of reason, rationality and rational inquiry in order to provide a rational basis for Christian myth, faith and beliefs. With Christian scholars taking over the approach from Islamic scholars, reason and rational inquiry are reintroduced into Western Europe. Islamic scholars had carried the approach through the Early Middle Ages, a period of cultural decline in Western Europe. Human understanding, while still consisting of myth, faith and beliefs, becomes one of reason rather than the earlier random myth, faith and beliefs.

The Renaissance, a 14<sup>th</sup>-century cultural movement that originated in Italy and later spread throughout Western Europe, saw a renewed focus upon the physical world and concern with human well-being in the here and now. It challenged and

questioned supernatural-spiritual explanation and understanding of the conditions of existence, arising in response to changes in socio-cultural conditions, a change from rural to urban existence, from agriculture to trade and commerce. The latter half of the Middle Ages saw the urbanization of Europe, military expansion, intellectual revival, the development of trade associations, the Hanseatic League, Italian city-states, and the establishment of national state governments. Reason and rationality were once more employed to understand the physical world, its nature, structure and workings, and to improve human worldly existence.

The Scientific Revolution of the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the application of reason, rationality and systematic inquiry to understand the physical world, its structure and workings, leading to advances in astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology, as well as advances in the method and approach of scientific investigation. In the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Age of Enlightenment, reason, rationality and systematic inquiry were applied in the humanities and social sciences in order to understand and manage the individual, society and the state, government, politics and economics. It was felt that reason, rationality and systematic inquiry, given their success in understanding the physical world, could lead to similar progress in human affairs. Enlightenment thinkers felt that systematic thinking might be applied to all areas of human activity in order to get beyond irrationality, superstition and the tyranny of serfdom and feudalism of the Middle Ages. If they could bring about an orderly vision of the physical world and universe, it was thought that reason, rationality and systematic inquiry could bring order and stability to human affairs and politics, after the long period of irrationality, superstition, and the upheavals of the religious wars following the Reformation.

The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw the establishment of reason, rationality and systematic inquiry as the dominant approach around the world to understanding the conditions of existence and the world around us. Although reason, rationality and science became the dominant approach to understanding the conditions of existence, they were not the only approach. Myth, faith and beliefs, both random and reasoned, are still widely practiced to this day.

Historically, human conceptual and mental development, developing the conceptual foundation and mental capacity to understand and manage human existence and development, progressed from random myth, faith and beliefs to reason, rationality and systematic inquiry, and reasoned myth, faith and beliefs. It progressed from applying reason, rationality and systematic inquiry to understand the physical world, to applying them in human affairs, to understand and manage the individual, society and the state, government, politics and economics, to improve the worldly conditions of human existence. The process of human conceptual and mental development however, throughout history, has been a reactive one. It has been a process of reacting to changing socio-cultural conditions, questioning and challenging established beliefs, views, values and conventions that in light of changing social, political, economic and technological

development and change no longer reflected and explained human experience or the conditions of existence. That is, human conceptual and mental development did not lead, define, guide and direct human-created socio-cultural development and change.

Today, with religious revival and the rise of religious fundamentalism across the world, we are in danger once more of reverting back to myth, faith and beliefs in understanding the conditions of human existence. Persisting and growing human individual, social, political, economic and environmental problems and difficulties are taken to be the results and consequences of a disconnection of science from religion, the disconnection of reason and rationality from myth, faith and beliefs. The answers and solutions are seen to lie in reconnecting faith and reason, religion and science. In the more extreme case, reason, rationality and science are viewed as the actual causes of the problems we face. The answers and solutions are taken to lie in a return to a strict interpretation and adherence to traditional religious myth, faith and beliefs.

However, the answers and solutions to the problems we face do not lie in moving back on the path of human conceptual and mental development and growth to myth, faith and beliefs, nor do they lie in further advances in traditional scientific and technological development. They do not lie in greater, more detailed and in-depth knowledge of the physical world, its nature, structure and workings, or more sophisticated tools to manage, control and direct the world around us, nature and the natural environment. The solutions require taking the next step in human conceptual and mental development and growth.

Dealing with the problems we face today requires more than myth, faith and beliefs -- mystical interpretations of the hidden, unknown, what lies beyond human experience, unquestioning devotion, and unsubstantiated assumptions, unsubstantiated by experiential evidence. It also requires more than reasoned and rational inquiry and objective knowledge and understanding of the natural universe, the nature, structure and workings of the physical world. Addressing the problems requires clarity of mind and understanding of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence and development; the role of nature, which lies beyond human control, and the role and responsibility in our existence and development, which by nature are individually ours to understand and manage. What is required is not collective myth, faith and beliefs, or objective knowledge about the physical world and natural universe. What is required is individual clarity of mind and understanding about the conditions, demands and challenges of individual human existence and development, that lie behind and that are reflected in individual experience, how to understand and manage them. Human affairs, human existence and development need to be understood and managed from the inside out and from the ground up, in their essence, in an integrated, or holistic way.

That is, beyond reason, rationality and systematic inquiry, the answers and solutions require the development of independence of mind and understanding;

individually understanding the conditions, demands and challenges of human existence and development that lie behind and are reflected in individual experience. They require understanding and managing, in the first instance, the mind, mental existence and mental development, from within the mind and mental existence. Moreover, the solutions require human conceptual and mental development and growth to be an active process at the level of the individual, not a reactive process at the level of the collective. It must be an active process driven by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, not a reactive process driven by human-created socio-cultural development and change. Human conceptual and mental development and growth must lead human-created socio-cultural development and change, not be governed by them.

We need to develop independence of mind and understanding, as discussed before, because we exist individually, mentally and physically independent of each other and any larger organic social collective whole. We need to develop understanding and the human natural mental potential, the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity, at the level of the individual, individually in the mind and mental existence, not at the level of the collective. We must develop independence of mind and understanding about the conditions, demands and challenges of existence that lie behind and are reflected in individual experience, not objective knowledge about the physical world, its nature, structure and workings. It is the conditions, demands and challenges of individual existence that we must understand and manage, not the physical world around us.

There is a difference between the natural universe and the natural conditions of human existence. In order to manage our existence we must understand the natural conditions, demands and challenges of our existence, not the natural universe. Objective knowledge of the physical world and natural universe does not give us an understanding of the natural conditions, demands and challenges of human existence. The conditions of human existence are only a small part or subset of the larger natural universe. They are specific to human beings, and are experienced individually in the mind and mental existence. To understand the conditions, demands and challenges of human existence we need to make sense of our experience and consider the conditions that lie behind and are reflected in them, not understand the natural universe, natural forces and processes.

Understanding the natural conditions of human existence is a matter of understanding how nature, natural forces and processes govern our existence and development, the demands they make and the challenges they pose for the individual. This requires understanding and differentiating between the role of nature that lies beyond our control and the role and responsibility in our existence and development that by nature are ours to understand and manage. Objective knowledge of nature and the structure and workings of the natural universe does not give us an understanding of our natural role and responsibility, their extent and limits, and what lies beyond them.

Understanding the conditions of our existence, we need to understand in the first instance the conditions, demands and challenges of the mind and mental existence. This is where we consciously exist and act, where we are individually in charge and in control, and where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. It is where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us, which lie behind and are reflected in our experience. It is where we make choices and decisions, where we define goals and objectives, where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions. It is where we must meet our mental needs, and where we must develop, exercise and practice our natural mental faculties, our natural mental powers and abilities, and necessary and appropriate mental skills and practices. It is where in the first instance we need to deal with, respond and adjust to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges. It is where we must establish the necessary conditions in everything we do and engage in, before we engage and deal with external conditions and the world beyond the mind and mental existence.

The process of human conceptual and mental development and growth must be an active and continuous process, at the level of the individual. The process must be defined and governed by the natural conditions, demands and challenges of existence, not, as traditionally has been the case, be a reactive process at the level of the collective, driven by human-created socio-cultural conditions, development and change. It is the natural conditions of existence, not human-created socio-cultural conditions, which in the first instance define and govern human existence and development. Human physical behaviour and actions, work and effort, as discussed earlier, must be guided and directed by mental work and effort, thought and understanding. Mental work and effort, conceptual and mental development and growth must not be governed by human-created socio-cultural development and change.

Human conceptual and mental development and growth must be driven by the natural conditions of existence, because we exist in and as part of a constantly unfolding and changing natural world. Everything within and around us, in our own mental and physical existence and in the world around us, is constantly unfolding and changing. We are confronted with constantly changing conditions, demands and challenges, requiring a process of continuous conceptual and mental development and growth, constantly reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving our understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, how we develop and use them, in light of change and changing conditions. Human conceptual and mental development and growth need to be driven, defined and governed by the natural conditions of existence in order to ensure understanding and managing of human existence and development, and human-created social, political, economic, scientific and technological developments do not contradict, conflict with or fall short of the natural conditions of existence. They need to be driven by the natural conditions of existence in order to make sure we do not operate beyond the limits of our natural role and responsibility, and that we do not try to manage the role of

nature that lies beyond our control, causing persisting and growing problems and difficulties for the individual, society and the natural environment.

## **9. Education and Training in Conceptual and Mental Development**

Developing the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity requires education and training in conceptual and mental development, developing, exercising and practicing in the individual the fundamentals and essentials in understanding, human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices, and required mental work and effort. This requires changing the traditional approach, focus and direction in education and training.

Traditionally in education and training the approach, focus and objective are socializing and training the individual in established socio-cultural conditions, established beliefs, views, values, conventions and practices; socialization and training in the established way of understanding and managing human existence and development. It involves socializing and training the individual in the knowledge, tools and skills to understand and manage existence and development within and contribute to the established socio-cultural reality and the larger collective whole, society. Understanding of the conditions of human existence and development, the human mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, mental work and effort if developed at all, are developed only indirectly within the context of socio-cultural socialization and training.

Traditional education and training involves socialization and training in the knowledge, tools and skills necessary to understand and manage existence and development from the top down and from the outside in, in an externalized, fragmented, generalized, dissociated and disconnected way, in the abstract. Socialization and training in the knowledge, tools and skills to understand, manage and organize human existence and development in the collective, with the individual occupying a given position, role and function in the larger social-collective whole; conceptualizing and understanding the conditions of existence and the world around us in the abstract, beyond individual experience, with knowledge being produced at the top level and acted on further down in the collective structure; dividing and separating the conditions of existence and the world around us into different issues, subject matters, disciplines, fields of study, and areas of human activity, specialization and expertise. Socialization and training in the knowledge, tools and skills to establishes in the collective, externally in the world around us, in socio-cultural and physical-material terms, what by nature we must establish individually, where we are in charge and in control, in the mind and mental existence; and to understand, manage and improve human existence and development through understanding, managing

and improving the world around us, establishing collectively the ideal external conditions of an ordered, stable, secure and predictable world around us.

What is required is education and training in conceptual and mental development, developing in the individual the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity. Developing independence of mind and understanding about the conditions, demands and challenges of human existence and development that lie behind and are reflected in individual experience. Moreover, developing, exercising and practicing in the individual the human natural mental potential, individual natural mental powers and abilities, necessary mental skills and practices, and the required mental work and effort, to understand and manage human existence and development existing in and as part of a constantly unfolding and changing world; existing individually, mentally and physically independent of others and of any larger organic social-collective whole, consciously existing and acting individually in the mind and mental existence.

Education and training in conceptual and mental development is a matter of developing, exercising and practicing in the individual the understanding, the mental powers and abilities, the mental skills and practices, the mental work and effort, to understand and manage existence and development from the inside out and from the ground up, in their essence, in an integrated and holistic way. Understanding and managing existence and development at the level of the natural conditions of existence that lie behind and are reflected in human experience, the experience of every individual human being; the natural conditions of existence that are common to all human beings, which in the first instance define and govern human existence and development. Not understanding and managing existence and development from the human-created socio-cultural level down to the level of the natural conditions of existence, as traditionally is the case. We must develop, exercise and practice in the individual the understanding, the mental powers and abilities, the mental skills and practices to understand and manage existence and development, demands and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions, everything in life we face and we have to deal with, in their essence, in depth and detail, in a holistic, differentiated but integrated, connected and related way. The individual needs to understand and manage them within the same conceptual framework, without dividing and separating them into different issues, subject matters, disciplines, fields of study and areas of human activity, specialization and expertise, defined and governed by different, competing and conflicting assumptions, objectives, approaches and practices.

Education and training in conceptual and mental development is to develop, exercise and practice in the individual the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices necessary to differentiate between and understand the role of nature, which lies beyond our control, and the role and responsibility in our existence and development, which by nature are individually ours to understand and manage; in order to understand and manage existence and development within the natural boundaries and limits of our natural role and

responsibility. Moreover, the individual needs to be able to differentiate between and understand the natural conditions of existence, which we must accept and accommodate and to which we must respond and adjust, and the human-created socio-cultural and physical-material conditions, which we need to correct and change where they contradict and conflict with the natural conditions. The individual also needs to differentiate between and understand human mental and physical existence and development, to distinguish between our mental and physical needs, which we must meet, respectively in mental and material terms.

Education and training in conceptual and mental development must develop, exercise and practice in the individual the understanding, the mental powers and abilities, the mental skills and practices, the mental work and effort to understand and manage existence and development at the level and within the context of understanding and managing, in the first instance, the mind, mental existence and mental development. Understanding and managing the mind, mental existence and mental development from within the mind and mental existence as reflected in individual experience; as the place where we consciously exist and act, where we are individually in charge and in control, and where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. The individual needs to understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where we experience and become aware and where we must consider and make sense of the conditions of existence, which lie behind individual experience; where we make choices and decisions where we define aims, goals and objectives, and where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions. We must understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where problems and difficulties have their roots and beginnings, and where answers and solutions must start.

We need to develop, exercise and practice in the individual the understanding, the mental powers and abilities, the mental skills and practices, the mental work and effort required to establish the necessary internal mental conditions in everything we do and engage in before acting, before engaging and dealing with external conditions, others, the world around us, nature and the natural environment. The individual must be able to establish the necessary internal mental conditions to understand and manage existence and development in a sustainable, peaceful and secure way; deal with, respond and adjust in the mind and mental existence to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges, in our own mental and physical existence and development and in the world around us, when only a minimum in mental work, effort and adjustment are required, and before they develop into larger problems and difficulties. We must be able to establish the necessary internal mental conditions to deal with the individual self, communicate and cooperate with each other, relate and interact with the world around us, with nature and the natural environment, within the natural parameters and the limits of our natural role and responsibility, without contradicting, conflicting with or falling short of the natural conditions of existence.

Education and training moreover needs to develop and set in motion in the individual a process of continuous, life-long conceptual and mental self-development and growth, constantly reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving individual understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, mental work and effort in light of change and changing conditions. The individual must develop, exercise and practice the skills to reconsider, update, correct, expand and improve, whenever necessary and required, the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices, mental work and effort we develop, on which we rely, how we develop and use them. We need to be able whenever necessary in light of change and changing conditions to reconsider, change and correct the choices and decisions we make, and how we make them, the aims, goals and objectives we pursue, and how we define them, the behaviour, actions and practices in which we engage, and how we plan, organize and manage them.

### **10. Making the 21<sup>st</sup> Century the Century of the Mind, Mental Existence and Mental Development**

Dealing with the ecological crisis and environmental problems and creating the necessary conditions for a sustainable, peaceful and secure future requires making the 21<sup>st</sup> century the century of the mind, mental existence and mental development. This does not mean the scientific study of the mind as a natural phenomena or just another human organ, like the brain, heart or lungs, but rather understanding and managing the mind and mental existence as the place where we consciously exist and act, where we are individually in charge and in control, where we must actively be engaged and take responsibility for what takes place and what we do. We must understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where we experience, become aware and consider the conditions of existence and the world around us; where we make choices and decisions, where we define goals and objectives, and where we plan, organize and manage our behaviour and actions.

It requires understanding and managing the mind and mental existence as the place where, how we deal with the self, communicate and cooperate with others, relate and interact with the world around us, nature and the natural environment are defined and governed. We need to understand the mind and mental existence as the place where in the first instance we must understand and manage our existence and development; where problems and difficulties, limits and shortcomings, errors and mistakes have their roots and beginnings, and where addressing them must start. It is the place where we must deal with, respond and adjust to change, changing conditions, demands and challenges before they develop into larger problems and difficulties. We must understand and manage the mind and mental existence as the place where we must meet non-material mental needs in non-material ways, through individual mental work and effort, in order to reduce human material consumption to the level of actual human natural material needs. It is the place where we need to establish a sense of self, a

sense of order and stability, certainty and security, to reduce interference in and degradation of the natural environment to a strictly necessary level in order to understand and manage human existence and development.

The answers and solutions to the ecological crisis and environmental problems and creating the conditions for a sustainable and secure future require making the 21<sup>st</sup> century the century of human conceptual and mental development and growth. Developing at the level of the individual, with every individual the necessary conceptual foundation and mental capacity, the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices to understand the role of nature, which lies beyond our control, and to manage the role and responsibility that by nature are ours to understand and manage. We need to understand and manage human existence and development, demands and challenges, problems and difficulties, change and changing conditions, everything in life we face and we have to deal with, at the level and within the context of understanding and managing, in the first instance, the mind, mental existence and mental development, from within the mind and mental existence, as reflected in individual experience. We must deal with, respond and adjust to change and changing conditions in the mind and mental existence, when only a minimum in mental work, effort and adjustment are required, and before they develop into larger problems and difficulties. We must individually engage in a process of continuous, life-long conceptual and mental self-development and growth, constantly reconsidering, updating, correcting, expanding and improving, in light of change and changing conditions, the understanding, mental powers and abilities, mental skills and practices we develop, upon which we rely, and how we develop them.