CONCEPT NOTE

The European Center for Peace and Development (ECPD), established by the United Nations University for Peace, has organized its recent annual international conferences in a new thematic framework on the Future of the World between Globalization and Regionalization, with a focus last year on human security. Building on its success in assembling many partners and friends both from the region and around the world, across many fields and the political, religious, academic and development domains, ECPD is projecting its efforts forward to achieve a deeper and wider understanding of the next essential directions that the region should take to build a more sustainable future. Fortunately, at the global level, the United Nations adopted a 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at a General Assembly summit in 2015, mapping out the fundamental transformations required by 2030 to address the many interrelated problems that the world is facing. At the heart of the agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals that integrate the economic, social and environmental challenges facing the world, and that put humans back at the centre, with the aim to leave no one behind. This is the theme to be explored in this conference, from various perspectives, in the search for ways forward to transform the region.

A new definition of sustainable development

Everyone wants development, first to rise out of poverty and then to achieve a better life. Our economic and political systems focus on the short term, aiming to achieve immediate profits or to satisfy voters and win the next election. In doing this, it is too easy to go into debt, borrowing to keep growing, or living off capital rather than relying only on the interest. But at some point, debts have to be repaid, and once the capital is gone, so is the potential for interest. The result is bankruptcy and poverty. What is true in finance, is equally true for natural resource capital and social capital. Sustainable development means to maintain the productivity and wealth of our society within the limits of our resources into the distant future. No past civilization has done this successfully; all reached environmental or social limits and collapsed.
The present economic system has generated great wealth, but concentrated it at the top, leaving half the world population behind. The resulting stress is fragmenting societies everywhere. Now, with the rapid evolution of science and technology, humanity has run up against planetary limits from which there is no escape, and we have little time left to change course before catastrophic events from climate change and famine to mass migrations and wanton corruption, and the resulting political instability, become unbearable.

The UN 2030 Agenda is a response to this, developed after wide consultation with stakeholders and agreed by all governments at the highest level. The UN Secretary-General, in his synthesis report on the process, called for a fundamental transformation in society and the economy. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the heart of this agenda define a paradigm shift for people and the planet that is inclusive and people-centred, leaving no one behind. The Agenda integrates the economic, social and environmental dimensions, calling for a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and mutual accountability with the participation of governments and all stakeholders. It requires that we establish transformative partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision and shared goals, mobilizing the power of culture, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, and mutual accountability at the center.

There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 targets, and about 240 indicators to measure progress towards these targets. The 17 goals are:

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture;
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all;
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all;
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;

15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;

16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and

17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development: Finance, Technology, Capacity-building, Trade, Systemic issues: Policy and institutional coherence, multi-stakeholder partnerships; data, monitoring and accountability.

As the outcome document of the UN Summit put it in adopting these goals: “This is an Agenda of unprecedented scope and significance. It is accepted by all countries and is applicable to all, taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. These are universal goals and targets which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development.”

This is an ambitious agenda, but it really defines what a successful society should achieve in the 21st century. There is enough wealth in the world, and with modern technology all this is possible. What is lacking is the political will for change, linked to the powerful vested interests in the present economic and political systems that resist change. Despite the promise in this agenda, many countries seem to be sliding backwards if not disintegrating.

The UN has established a High Level Political Forum that meets annually to assess progress towards these goals, and all governments are expected to submit voluntary national reports on their progress. Countries should also be involving their populations and all stakeholders in discussions of these goals at the national level to create systems of public accountability.

**Translation of the global goals to the regional and national levels**

These, of course, are global goals, and it is the responsibility of each country to translate them down to the national level. Country situations are different, with distinct priorities. One may need to raise its rural population out of poverty, or create employment for the young, while another may have to reduce overconsumption of energy, deal with masses of wastes, and address the needs of an ageing population. Thinking through the SDG goals and the issues they raise, and setting national priorities, is itself a useful exercise, and one that should not be left only to political leaders. The SDGs can serve as a checklist for economic, social and environmental needs, and their targets as the basis for a shared vision of what a country wants for its future and a way of measuring progress towards that vision. The countries of the Balkans have started on this journey, with varying
degrees of success. Too many trends are still in the direction of increasing unsustainability.

Because of similarities across the region, and elements of shared history, it might be useful to explore shared regional priorities for the SDGs. Are there similarities in transport systems, agriculture, population structure and emigration, nature conservation, rural poverty or soil management, for example, that would benefit from common approaches or regional collaboration?

The region also needs to ask itself what is the Balkans share of the global targets? Is the region sufficiently ambitious in the goals each country has set for itself? How big is the gap, and what would be needed to bridge it?

The 2030 Agenda also provides an opportunity to reflect on the future. What is needed to transform the region? Can the Balkans have its own 2030 agenda with a vision of what the region would be like in 2030 if the goals are achieved? Having a positive view of the future that is possible can inspire greater efforts to realize that vision, and encourage young people to stay at home rather than emigrate in the search for better opportunities.

The papers for the ECPD conference could consider the status and trends of each country in the western Balkans on some or all of the SDGs. Are there good examples of progress on particular goals? How do the different countries of the region compare on their progress towards the goals? Countries are particularly sensitive to peer pressure, so seeing that one country is ahead can inspire the others to try to catch up. How much have stakeholders been involved? Are there roles for business and civil society? Is the public informed about the SDGs and implicated in their achievement? Do SDGs make the news? Do country reports to the HLPF reflect the realities on the ground?

**Raising the level of ambition**

Nowhere in the world is on track to achieving all the SDGs by 2030. Many trends are still in the wrong direction, and for some such as eliminating hunger we are falling back after a period of improvement. If we want to transform the world, we must raise the level of ambition.

Climate change is a good example of what is now required, as the same changes will be necessary for many other sustainability targets. The climate is changing much faster than scientists had predicted, and we seem to be very close to tipping points where positive feedbacks could make it impossible to go backwards. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has now determined that we must limit global warming to 1.5°C to have a chance of avoiding irreversible and dangerous climate change. A lead author of the latest IPCC report on 1.5°C said we have to do everything, and we have to do it immediately. This is not impossible, since we have the necessary technologies, but it will require unprecedented rates of transformation as net greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced to zero by mid-century. If everyone adopts a low-carbon lifestyle immediately, we can avoid overshooting the limit. Otherwise we shall need to use expensive carbon capture and storage and unproven carbon dioxide removal technologies to come back down to a safe level by 2100. All the following must be done together to succeed.
First is to stop using fossil fuels. The move to renewable energy is accelerating, generating a quarter of world electricity in 2016, more than 10% of the total energy consumption, but we need almost complete decarbonization of electricity generation by 2050, meaning investing in renewable sources and closing down all fossil fuel generating plants in the region. Any continuing use of fossil fuels must be accompanied by carbon capture and storage.

The Balkans much change how they travel. At present, most transport is powered by oil (petrol/gasoline, diesel and aviation fuel) and just a small fraction from renewables. A quarter of the energy-related CO2 emissions come from transport, and this is growing at 2.5% per year. Even a 30% reduction by 2030 means switching to electric vehicles (powered by renewables), improving fuel efficiency, replacing oil by biofuels including for aviation, and making personal sacrifices like using buses and trains over cars and planes, and traveling less. Investments in public transport are a priority.

All the buildings in the region must be transformed for high energy efficiency. Homes, shops, offices and buildings account for a quarter of energy-related emissions, mostly electricity for lighting, heating, cooling, elevators, office equipment and appliances, but also fossil fuels (gas) used for heating and cooking. These emissions need to be reduced by 80-90% by 2050, requiring energy-efficient lighting, insulation and double-glazed windows, and non-fossil-fuel heating and cooking systems. 5% of existing buildings should be refurnished every year, and all new buildings should be zero carbon by 2020, moving away from carbon-intensive concrete and steel to carbon-neutral wood-based materials or changing construction methods entirely.

Industry uses coal and other fossil fuels to produce heat and steam to produce metals, pulp and paper, chemicals, concrete and minerals, and this needs to be reduced by 80%. Phasing out coal, increasing energy efficiency and electrifying would only be a beginning. Research is needed to find new, carbon-free industrial processes for cement, iron and steel, plus carbon capture and storage for uses that cannot be replaced in time. Some new technologies exist, but they must become more affordable and scaled up.

Agriculture and forestry must be transformed and deforestation reduced. Land use produces one quarter of carbon emissions, raising issues of forests, farms and food. Growing food inevitably emits CO2, and pasture with cows on it is a gigantic source of CO2 and methane. Land can be a carbon sink with good soil management, and forests pull CO2 out of the air. Abandoned farmland should be reforested, and agriculture intensified. Consumption of foods with high greenhouse gas emissions, especially from cattle, should be reduced, swapping pasture for forests.

Reaching net emissions does not mean no emissions, since some cannot be eliminated, like nitrous oxide from agricultural fertilizers. Any remaining emissions need to be balanced by removing carbon dioxide already in the atmosphere. All pathways to 1.5°C require carbon dioxide removal, for which we have no proven technologies. Planting forests is the simplest way.

Changing individual consumer behavior to reduce demand for energy is the biggest challenge. Using an electrical appliance, spending time inside a building, using hot water,
traveling anywhere in a vehicle, or buying or eating anything, contributes to the problem. Everyone needs to start today to make sacrifices: drive less, fly less, consume less meat, have fewer children. A plant-based diet reduces a food carbon footprint by 90%. Avoid beef with a carbon footprint three times pork and six times chicken. Tropical fruits imported by air, and cheese are other offenders. Reduce short car journeys; car-pool, bike or walk instead. But one vacation flight would wipe out the benefits of going vegetarian for a year or driving 2500 km less. In your home, replace appliances with energy-efficient models, lower the temperature of hot water, use a low-flow showerhead, do not leave appliances on standby, and dry washing outside. Smart thermostats can reduce household emissions by up to 26%. Moving to a smaller home can cut emissions by 27%. At the office, turning off lights and the workstation when leaving, and unplugging the phone charger, can cut emissions by up to 28%. Working from home can mean driving much less.

Above all, there is a lack of political will for the biggest transformation ever. People have to demand these changes with mass movements. This may seem impossible, but we have to try. We need to convince everyone that green alternatives improve our quality of life as well as the environment.

Mobilizing all the stakeholders

If everyone must be involved in the effort that is required, then widespread public information about the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is essential. The conference should reflect on educational programmes in the schools and places of worship, in the media and in political discourses. The effort should be like going on a war footing, with all efforts focussed on the objectives. The challenge is too important to become the subject of partisan political wrangling. Everyone should unite against the common enemy, our own unsustainability. We have waited too long, and ignored too many warnings, to delay action any longer.

25 March 2019
XV ECPD International Conference
THE UN AGENDA 2030
TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD
(Belgrade City Hall, 25 October 2019)

AGENDA

Chair of the Conference: Federico Mayor
ECPD Executive Director: Negoslav P. Ostojić
Conference Director: Roberto Savio
Rapporteurs: Arthur Dahl
Manuela Mesa

09:00-10:00 Registration of participants

10:00 – 11:00 OPENING CEREMONY
CHAIR’S OPENING ADDRESS AND KEYNOTE SPEECHES

Federico Mayor, President, ECPD Council
Former Director General UNESCO, President of the Foundation for Culture of Peace

Slavica Djukić-Dejanović
Minister in the Government of the Republic of Serbia

Francisco Rojas, Rector of the UN University for Peace

Erhard Busek, Vice-Chancellor of Austria a.d.,
President of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe

Confict and crises in Europe and the world – and how to manage it!
What means sustainability? Are there limits for Europe?
Globalization, digitalization and what next?

Arthur Dahl, President, International Environment Forum, Switzerland

11:00 – 11:30 PANEL I - ECONOMIC GROWTH
(SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 8 AND 9)

CO-CHAIRS: Erhard Busek / Yoji Koyama

The Role of Slovenia in the Western Balkans
Jožef Kunič, Honorary President, Slovenian Association for International Relations

New Economics of Small Open Economies
Thomir Domazet, University of Zagreb, Croatia

11:30 - 11:45 Coffee break
12:00 – 13:00  PANEL II - HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
(SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 AND 10)

CO-CHAIRS: Federico Mayor / Don Wallace

Massive Outflow of People from EU Periphery and Its Depopulation:
Implication for the European Integration
Yoji Koyama, Niigata University, Japan

Academics and Sustainable Development Goals
Marjan Svetličič, Ljubljana University

The Problems of the Strengthening the Stability on the Postsowijet Area
Boris Shmelev, Russian Academy for Sciences and Arts, Russian Federation

Agenda 2030 and New Humanism
Darko Tanasković, Former Ambassador of Serbia to UNESCO

Public Health and Lingua France for Population Resilience
Two minute tribute to: Two ECPD Scholars (Wieler/Čimović)
Jeffrey Levett, National School of Public Health, Athens, Greece

Global Transformation: Emergencies, Dilemmas and Decisions
Richard Pagett, Future States, Wiltshire, United Kingdom, Professor ECPD UN

Is Anti-Globalization a New normal?
Nikola Popovski, Dean FON University, North Macedonia

The Meaning of War Violence Against Women and Children: Individual, Family and Social Perspective
Prof. Dr. Mila Goldner Vukov, PhD, FRANZCP Cairns Integrated Mental Health and ATODS, Queensland, Australia

Core values for delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals
Farhang Tahzib, Director of Public Health, West Sussex Primary Care Trust, UK

Human Capital and Knowledge Market
Dragan Koković, Professor ECPD UN University for Peace

13:00 – 13:30  PANEL III - ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE
(SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 6, 7, 11, 12, 13 AND 15)

CO-CHAIRS: Geoffrey Lipman / Arthur Dahl

Climate Friendly Travel - Tomorrow’s Imperative Today
Geoffrey Lipman, Creative Disruption Architect, The SUNX Program

Climate Change – Desertification and Degradation
Nigel Carter, President En-Venture, UK, Senior Lecturer ECPD UPUN

The Greek Crisis: Lessons Learnt from a Case of Unsustainable Growth
Georges Prévélas, Université Paris 1 – Pantheon Sorbonne, Paris, France

The SDGs, the Anthropocene, and Paradigm Shifts
Merle Leffkoff, Founder and Executive Director, Center for Emergent Diplomacy

Making Cities Inclusive, Safe and Sustainable – the Creative Intertextual Communicative Approach
Christo Kftandjiev, Kazakhstan Humanitarian Juridical Innovative University (KazHJIU)

Sustainable Development through Improved Innovation Ecosystem
Boris Cizelj, DOBA Business School, Alma Mater Europaea, Maribor, President KEN

13:30 – 15:00  Break
**Panel IV - Institutions, Finance and Cooperation (Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17)**

**Co-Chairs:** Horst Mahr / Roberto Savio

- **The Rule of Law as a fundamental Sustainable Development Goal: Challenges of the Balkan Countries**
  - Vlado Kambovski, Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Skopje

- **The New World Disorder. Leadership Needed, Urgently**
  - Horst Mahr, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Association, Munich, Germany

- **Challenges and Opportunities to implement SDG 16: Promoting Peaceful and Inclusive Societies**
  - Manuela Mesa, Director, Center for Education and Research for Peace, Culture for Peace Foundation

- **The Crisis of Multilateralism and Xenophobia, Nationalism and Populism**
  - Roberto Savio, Director of ECPD International Relations

- **Elmostkbal presentation**
  - Amro Selim, Chairman, Elmostkbal organization for Media Studies

- **French-German Partnership and Enlargement of EU in the Western Balkans**
  - Nano Ružin, Rector, FON University, Macedonia

- **Albania's Path Towards Achieving the UN Agenda 2030**
  - Paskal Milo, Albanian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Tirana

- **Balkan Aspect** of Agenda 2030
  - Silvo Devetak, University of Maribor, Slovenia

- **Montenegro as an Ecological State - Intentions and Projects that this Constitutional and Fundamental Commitment of the Community to Respect the Place**
  - Miodrag Vuković, Chair, Committee on International Relations, Parliament of Montenegro

- **Global challenges in front of Agenda 2030**
  - Zahari Zahariev, President, Slavyani Foundation, Bulgaria

- **West and Terrorism**
  - Boško Bojović, School of Higher Education for Social Sciences, Paris, France

- **Specific Chinese vision for Agenda 2030**
  - Nikolai Tomov, Director, Slavyani Foundation, Bulgaria

16:45 – 17:00 Coffee break

**Continuation of the Panel IV**

- **Achieving the UN 2030 Goals: Public Spirited Leadership and Administrative Blessing**
  - Vern Redekop, Saint Paul University, Canada

- **The Role of Europe and the Balkans in Achieving the Global Development Goals**
  - Samir Banoob, Tampa University, USA

- **Reassessment of the Security-Development Nexus: UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and Human Security**
  - Jovan Manasijevski, Former Minister of Defence of Macedonia
The UN 2030 Agenda from a UK Urban Perspective  
Danny Briottet, Project Manager, Music Producer & Broadcaster, London, UK

Culture of Peace and Development at the Local Level  
Denis Alberto Torres Perez, Director of the Institute Martin Luther King

18:00 – 19:00 Final discussion

19:00 - 19:30 CLOSING SESSION  
CHAIR’S CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
Federico Mayor, President of the ECPD Council

20:00 - 21:30 Reception hosted by:  
Federico Mayor, President of the ECPD Council / Chairman of the Conference  
Negoslav P. Ostojić, ECPD Executive Director

Speeches are strictly limited to 8 minutes, discussions 2 minute

Working language: English

Note: Submitted papers and selected discussion contributions will be published in the Conference Proceedings.