

Globalisation

Economy in the Service of Life –
Response of the
Evangelical Church of Westphalia
to the Soesterberg Letter

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1. Preface

In the framework of the worldwide ecumenical consultation process, the 2002 *Soesterberg Letter* on “Economy in the Service of Life” challenged the western European churches to respond (cf. Appendix 1). The Evangelical Church of Westphalia decided to concentrate on globalisation as the annual focus for 2003 and 2004 in the framework of the *Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence*. The 2003 Regional Synod decided to discuss globalisation as one of the key issues at the 2004 Regional Synod.

The Church Board established a working group comprised of members of our regional church’s Standing Committee for World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility (cf. Appendix 2) to prepare a draft response to the *Soesterberg Letter*. Following intensive deliberations, this year’s Regional Synod unanimously adopted the response with one abstention in the present form (2.), together with decisions on the implementation and further activities (3.) (cf. also Appendix 5.4 press release).

At the same time, the President called upon the church districts and congregations to participate in the discussion process within the Westphalian regional church. Numerous church congregations and districts complied with this request – supported, inter alia, by study documents published by our regional church on “Globalisation – there are alternatives” (*“Globalisierung – es geht auch anders”*). As a result of this process, District Synods submitted numerous motions to the Regional Synod, which were taken into account in the consultation process on the draft response to the *Soesterberg Letter*.

In order to contribute our partner churches’ perspective to the discussion, we invited *ecumenical guests* from North and South America, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and representatives of the Conference of European Churches to the Regional Synod, all of whom focus on globalisation in their areas of work or in their home churches and some of whose countries are particularly strongly affected by economic globalisation.

These guests were:

– *Dr. Fidon Mwombeki*, General Secretary of the NW Diocese, ELC Tanzania – *Bishop Ebenezer C. Camino*, United Church of Christ in the Philippines – *Dr. Wallace Ryan Kuroiwa*, United Church of Christ USA – *President Federico Schäfer* and *Former President Juan Pedro Schaad*, Evangelical Church of the River Plate (Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay)

- *Pastor Piotr Gás*, International Dietrich-Bonhoeffer-Centre for Study and Encounters in Szczecin, Poland, and
- *Pastor Rüdiger Noll* and *Dr. Dr. Peter Pavlovic*, Conference of European Churches.

Our *ecumenical guests* participated intensely in the discussion, significantly impacting several passages in the response.

The Evangelical Church of Westphalia regards its response to the Soesterberg Letter as a contribution to a European stance, both within the EKD and in the framework of the Conference of European Churches, in the run-up to the forthcoming General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Porto Alegre in 2006.

In order to ensure that the response of the regional church of Westphalia is accessible to our partner churches and available for more broadly-based ecumenical discussions, beyond the German language area, the response, the relevant decisions adopted by Regional Synod and the keynote paper by Dr. Diefenbacher (4.) have been translated into English. For financial reasons we have decided to publish a bilingual version of this study document.

I hope that this response will trigger a welter of suggestions and stimuli, those within and outside of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, which will help a beneficial effect on a globalisation process designed in spirit of responsibility for present and future generations.

Präses Alfred Buß

2. Response of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia to the Soesterberg Letter

“Economy in the service of life”

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Soesterberg documents: Economy in the Service of Life

In view of economic injustice and ecological destruction, questions are being asked by many churches in the countries of the South and increasingly in Eastern Europe, including our partner churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and also by many individuals and groups in our Church and society. They are wondering why the gap is widening between socially or economically marginalized people and the beneficiaries of economic growth, some of whom have accumulated enormous riches. They point out clearly to us: We are challenged as a worldwide community of Christian churches when our brothers and sisters in Christ are excluded from living their lives in dignity.

“If one organ suffers, they all suffer together”, says the Apostle Paul with regard to the unity of the church as the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:26). Based on 1 Cor. 12:26, the Soesterberg letter, written by an ecumenical conference held in Soesterberg in the Netherlands in 2002, asks us churches in western Europe to critically analyse world economic developments for reasons of faith and to apply political influence so as to facilitate humane and sustainable development. This conference was held in connection with a joint process launched by the member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Conference of European Churches (CEC), aiming at achieving an increasing level of commitment concerning questions related to worldwide justice.¹ A Declaration on the Global Crisis of Life adopted by a forum of the churches of the South in Buenos Aires in 2003 pointedly refers to privatisation and the deregulation² of markets, legitimised by neo-liberalism, as the key reasons why poverty is growing and people are being excluded from any kind of development in many countries of the South.

God’s promises of salvation relate to all people, and economic impoverishment is incompatible with God’s will; accordingly, it is part of the basic mission of the church to ask the question as to how an economic system can serve life. As the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, we are therefore called upon to speak out on the questions concerning the deregulation of markets and the privatization policy, raised in the documents mentioned above. It is necessary for us to raise specific

1 Participants in the worldwide process include the regional ecumenical associations, in Europe the Conference of European Churches (CEC) that prepared its own position paper for the Soesterberg Conference: “European Social Market Economy – an Alternative Model for Globalisation? A discussion

paper, prepared by the North-South Working Group of the Church and Society Commission“ (www.cec-kek.org). The Soesterberg letter attached to this response is also publicly accessible at www.ekwv.de.

2 Market deregulation denotes the dismantling or complete withdrawal of the state from regulatory intervention in market processes.

questions concerning the many different reasons for flawed economic developments and the drastic poverty experienced in many parts of the world, particularly by women.

3

Hence, totally different developments may be observed in the countries of the South and in eastern European countries. East Asia, South East Asia and South America, in particular, have recorded impressive economic growth rates over the past ten years so that some of these countries have started to successfully compete with production sites in the North. The number of starving people was reduced by 70 million in these parts of the world. Other regions have experienced an aggravation of their economic situation, in particular the situation of the poorest of the poor: hence, the number of hungry people has risen sharply in the Middle East, SubSaharan Africa and recently in a number of CIS successor states. In these countries, innumerable people are *excluded* from a life in dignity. In Africa, in particular, whole peoples are excluded from playing an active role in shaping the globalisation process. Apart from domestic causes, e.g. mismanagement by corrupt power élites, ethnic conflicts or the lack of legal security, this is also due to world trade conditions which constitute an unjust framework for many countries. They are therefore in a difficult situation, in particular due to the strongly protectionist attitude of the USA and the EU in the field of agriculture. The EU and the USA spend more than 200 billion dollars annually on subsidizing their agricultural sectors. The governments of the OECD countries⁴ subsidize their agricultural sectors at a cost that, taken together, exceeds the gross national product of all of Africa.⁵

Developments thus vary considerably and must be analysed thoroughly concerning their root causes. The pressing challenge for all those with responsibility in the political and economic spheres is, and remains, the Millennium Development Goals⁶ to halve poverty in the world by 2015, reaffirmed by the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and leading industrialized nations. Currently there is good reason to fear that these goals cannot be achieved. Within the transnational ecumenical community of churches we consider it to be a scandal that countless people are excluded from a life in dignity. The worldwide worsening of

3 According to the World Bank, the threshold for absolute poverty in (sub-Saharan) Africa is a per-capita income of US\$1 and in Latin America US\$2 per day. Worldwide, 3 billion people currently have to live on less than US\$2 per day. One fifth of humanity (1.2 billion people) eke out a living at less than US\$1

per day. 70 % of them are women. The number of women living in absolute poverty has risen in the last two decades by 50 %. Poverty is increasingly feminine, even in industrialized countries.

4 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: association of leading industrialized nations and economically relatively highly developed countries such as Australia, Iceland, New Zealand, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Hungary.

5 epd documentation 49/2001, p. 34.

6 The main political aim of the Millennium Development Goals is to combat poverty.

the ecological crises is just as grave. Over the past ten years alone, almost 100 million hectares of forest have been lost, mainly due to the fact that poor peasants in Africa and Latin America have been forced to clear forests to obtain arable land or fuel. Only 15 % of the population in the richer countries cause 50 % of worldwide carbon dioxide emissions, but the poorer countries pay, and will continue to pay, the lion's share of the "costs" in the form of the associated acceleration of climate change. Due to environmental destruction, they lose up to 8 % of their gross domestic product every year and suffer from the devastating impact on people's health and well-being. Although the governments of almost all countries committed themselves to engage in ecologically sustainable economic and development policies as early as 1992 at the UN World Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the minimum goals adopted at that conference are far from being achieved. For the benefit of short-term economic interests, the Earth will continue to be damaged in the long run, far beyond the limits of its ecological carrying capacity. Global climate change is becoming increasingly apparent, caused essentially by the excessive use of fossil fuels in the industrialized countries. Future generations, in particular, will have to pay the price. Here, too, the countries of the South will be particularly severely affected.

1.2 The ecumenical perspective in the tension between winners and losers of economic globalisation

Our sister churches in the South and East ask us the following questions:

- What is your own practical real-life experience of the globalisation processes?
- What does the unity of churches as the one Body of Christ mean to you in the context of economic globalisation?
- How do you manage your own funds in your congregations, church districts and regional churches?
- What do you do to ensure fairer economic action and trading in our One World?

The process of radical change associated with economic globalisation has now also reached us.

People increasingly feel marginalized in our society. The scandal of mass unemployment which has persisted since the mid-1970s has become the experience of an entire generation. People are suffering painful restrictions in health care, old-age pensions and social security. These critical developments do *not only* result from the process of economic globalisation but also e.g. from the decades of neglect of the demographic factor and the strong rise in productivity.

In Germany, too, we have a large number of people living in poverty. At the same time, labour-intensive production sectors are outsourced to other parts of the globe so that less highly skilled people have fewer and fewer opportunities in the labour

market. Our fellow citizens therefore feel increasingly insecure when it comes to their livelihood. Almost every day we observe media reports about the decisions taken by companies operating on an international level to slash jobs in Germany and shift them to so-called low-wage countries.

Overall, the unjust distribution of wealth has worsened considerably in the past thirty years: in 1973, 6.5 per cent of German households lived in “relative poverty”, i.e. had an income of less than 50 per cent of the average income of German households. By 1998, this proportion had risen to 10.9 per cent. The number of people on supplementary benefit in Germany has increased fivefold over the past 40 years. In 2002, 2.76 million people received income support. This corresponds to 3.3 per cent of the population. At the same time, the proportion of households considered to be “relatively rich” has increased more than fivefold. In 1998, the upper third of private households accounted for 59 per cent of the entire disposable income of households in the Federal Republic of Germany, while the bottom two-thirds together accounted for only 41 per cent. The development was particularly dramatic for the lowest-income households: the bottom tenth lost 13 per cent within 25 years, while the second-to-last tenth lost 6.8 per cent of its share of the income. Twenty per cent of West German households, i.e. more than 13 million people, are thus falling further and further below the average income level.⁷

People are concerned and ask themselves: Will I be able to maintain my social status in the future? Am I – in particular older workers – in danger of dropping to the status of a social benefit recipient within a few years’ time, irrespective of my current income level, because of the high level of unemployment? How long will I be able to face up to the high competitive pressure? When will I give up struggle and what will happen to my family and myself?

As part of our society, the church is also affected by this trend. Our church members are among the jobless and down-drifters. Apart from several other factors, this also affects the church’s income situation. Will our church be forced to withdraw from certain areas of work and make some of its employees redundant?

We still live in a wealthy society with a well-structured social security system. Compared with many marginalized⁸ churches in the South, German churches still have a relatively strong status within society, are expressly recognized by the government, and are heard on key social issues. Via the church tax system, and hence their members, the churches are able to participate to a large extent in the economic de

⁷ Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (ed.) (2001) *Lebenslagen in Deutschland, Der erste Armutsund Reichtumsbericht der Bundesregierung*, Berlin, p. 26. ⁸ Marginalized churches are churches whose voices are not heard by society.

velopment of Germany, the biggest export nation. This must be included in our considerations if we aim to come up with a serious response to the questions put to us in the Soesterberg letter.

Our response follows the three-stage ecumenical process of “seeing” (chapter 2) – “judging” (chapter 3) – “acting” (chapter 4).

- *In chapter 2 we ask more specifically: what are we aware of concerning the multi-faceted phenomenon of globalisation?*
- *In chapter 3 we try to identify how economic globalisation challenges us as church. What are the theological/ethical questions at stake, and what are we called to do in view of our Christian conception of people and society? Is there a trend towards an absolute economy, with a quasi-religious dimension, in current economic processes? What is the role of the biblical traditions of God’s justice, God’s option for the poor and the well-being of the whole of society in this context? How does our ecclesiology help us to identify the fundamental features of an economy in the service of life?*
- *Chapter 4 deals with areas of action within our church, and our responsibility to speak and act on the basis of dialogue in our own society and the worldwide ecumenical community.*

2. Globalisation

2.1 What are we aware of?

From an economic perspective, the ambivalent term “globalisation” primarily denotes the emergence of international markets for financial capital, products, services and jobs. In that respect, globalisation is a process dating back to the early days of industrialization. Over the last few decades, this process of the increasing integration of worldwide markets has gained new momentum: since the mid-1970s, economic policies have increasingly reflected a liberalization of world trade and world financial markets. This dynamism has generated an incredibly strong increase in international flows of finance, in particular. However, world trade and direct investment in other countries have also shown exorbitant growth.

Due to changes in the political framework and technological innovation, these processes have had particularly strong effects over the past twenty years. The collapse of the states of the Warsaw Pact and the opening up of the borders in virtually all countries in the world has opened up new opportunities for the economy. In addition, there has been an absolutely revolutionary development of information and communication technologies, facilitating the “real-time” handling of information all over the world. Due to the development of traffic and means of transport, the movement of goods and human mobility has taken on new dimensions. Against this background, we are witnessing a globalized networking of trade flows in goods, services and finance and worldwide mobility in business transactions, tourism and migration. Cultural and religious ways of life are intermingling. This gives rise to intensive intercultural and interreligious encounters but frequently also nourishes fears of cultural take-over and alienation. The resulting insecurity and attempts to reject such influences support and strengthen fundamentalist positions. Issues that seemed to have been overcome for a long time are flaring up again: conflicts hide behind cultural and religious motives. Wars are becoming “holy” again.

The exchange of information via the mass media raises people’s awareness of the fact that everything is interdependent worldwide. Apart from the economic aspects mentioned above, this also concerns questions of a global human rights and environmental policy. Environmental threats and policy measures can rarely be considered on a purely national scale.

Hence, a network of global communication and interaction has emerged. We perceive the growth of economic trade relationships but also a sharing of information, ideas, political convictions and religious and cultural patterns. Physical distances are increasingly losing importance. More and more events are simultaneously per-

ceived all over the world and impact different places in the world with ever shorter delays.

The diversity of levels of activity linking up persons over ever-greater distances in less than no time reinforce the impression of complexity and lack of transparency. Economic and political action is increasingly dependent on factors which can hardly be influenced at all, or only very indirectly. One of the key reasons is the fact that local social action is increasingly being influenced by distant factors – such as price trends in remote markets or environmental damage caused in other parts of the world. In the process of globalisation, the relationship between the state, the market and civil society has changed.

Nevertheless, globalisation must not be understood as an imperative. Instead, we must try to identify the political decisions, in particular those concerning economic or business policy, that shape or promote globalisation and serve specific, identifiable interests. The network of information and decision-making emerging throughout the world increases mutual dependence but is by no means a network of equal partners; rather, it is characterized by significant imbalances, by power centres that determine developments to a greater or lesser extent, by direct and indirect dependence – even to the extent of excluding people from any influence worth mentioning.

In greater detail, we see

- more and more countries – including economically weaker countries – having to lift trade restrictions,
- new possibilities for inter-cultural encounters opening up,
- the world market stepping up the pressure to engage in cultural adjustment,
- responsibility for many areas of our lives being increasingly understood as a global task,
- an increase in cut-throat competition with an increase in fundamental insecurity in our countries,
- a decline in political influence on economic processes,
- an increase in migratory movements⁹, at the same time sharper controls on asylum,
- an increase in environmental pollution and overexploitation of resources,
- an increase in public poverty,
- cutting off entire regions/continents (Africa) from world trade,
- social, economic and political developments in Europe, particularly the process of EU enlargement and its consequences for the lives of individuals and societies.

9 Migration has become a general term for worldwide migratory movements of individuals and groups searching for new perspectives for survival.

2.2 The return of economic liberalism as a challenge for the churches

Most ecumenical statements call the process of economic and cultural globalisation “neo-liberalism”. Since this term has ideological connotations and thus renders discussions more difficult in the German economic debate, we will replace it by “economic liberalism”.¹⁰

In the context of economic globalisation, we have experienced a renaissance of economic liberalism all over the world. This is a policy that underlines individual entrepreneurial action, the freedom of individual economic units¹¹ and the positive force of competition within a market economy. The theory is based on the principle of increasing efficiency by means of competition, which promotes performance. The prime task of the state is to guarantee private property rights, establish freedom of contract, create the conditions for a stable currency and keep markets open. The purpose of this stable framework is to offer maximum freedom to the individual and safeguard it over time, promoting individual initiative and individual responsibility. The economic goal is to stimulate the economy, growth and employment. To what extent should this theory, termed “neo-liberalism” in many ecumenical statements, be criticized from a church point of view?

Three aspects must be mentioned:

- The ideological bases of neo-liberalism:
Neo-liberalism is based on the central idea of organizing more and more areas of society according to the market principle, under which people engage in rational calculation and act out of self-interest. This logic follows a strictly individualistic way of thinking. It is inextricably linked with a normative individualism and an understanding of freedom as the freedom from arbitrariness, and as freedom of choice. The yardstick for social development is the action and decisions taken by the individual players, whose freedom is to be protected – in particular the freedom to engage in economic activity. On the other hand, questions concerning a good life for everybody, common social objectives and ongoing solidarity, play a minor role at best. With this one-sided orientation, the neo-liberal conception of people and society is far removed from the way Christians understand them.
- Policy options in economic liberalism: Decisions taken by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are essentially determined by an informal agreement of the representatives of the

¹⁰ Not to be confused with what is known in German as *ordoliberalismus*, and whose founders (Eucken, Röpke, Müller-Armack) advocated the linking of economic freedom and a state-guaranteed social balance. See para. 3.2.

¹¹ An economic term characterizing individual economic action.

G8 nations. The developing countries basically do not have a say. Though making up the majority of the world's population, they still cannot enjoy genuine rights of participation in decision-making. Attempts to introduce this have failed because of the current situation regarding voting rights in the IMF and the World Bank. The United States uses its veto to assert liberal economic policies and prevent fundamental reforms. The European Union, too, grants political priority to its particular economic interests, although in certain regards it is now taking more account of sustainability. Global economic control mechanisms thus form an undemocratic structure in parallel to the United Nations system, preventing the developing countries from representing their interests in international financial institutions. The failure of the 2003 World Trade Conference held in Cancún, Mexico, is a sign of the protest of many developing countries and emerging economies.

- **The real effects of neo-liberalism:**

In some parts of the world, economic liberalism has successfully promoted economic growth and prosperity, while it has not resulted in an improvement of living conditions for the majority of the population in other parts of the world (e.g. India). Vast parts of Africa have been virtually excluded from worldwide development. The situation of the most deprived groups has remained basically unchanged all over the world. This is mainly due to the excessive debts of the South, which have persisted for more than 30 years now. As the example of Argentina has illustrated¹², it has led to a situation in which the funds raised for debt servicing and interest payments time and again exceed capital inflows from direct foreign investment and international development aid. Moreover, social imbalances are being reinforced in almost all countries, as the income of the economic élites grow particularly strongly in countries characterized by the onset of overall prosperity. From a Christian/social ethical perspective, these trends indi

12 In the past, Argentina was considered the richest country in Latin America. Argentina's foreign debt started to get out of control under the military dictatorship from 1976-1983. While Argentina fulfilled the IMF conditions in an exemplary manner in the 1990s, its foreign debt rose to US\$ 146 billion by 1999. This benefited the corrupt political and economic élite in the country and international creditors

whose financial interests were secured by new loans granted by the IMF. Massive impoverishment of vast sections of the population led to hunger riots and a massive protest movement as well as total political collapse in 2001: within two weeks, there were five successive presidents. The second element

of economic mismanagement was overestimation based on an economic policy primarily focused on money supply control and monetary elements. In this context, the Director of the IMF Department of Research Mussa critically stated in 2002: "And, in view of the Fund's deep and continuing involvement

with Argentina's economic policies, and the confidence in and praise for those policies that the Fund so often expressed, it follows that the Fund must bear responsibility for the mistakes that it made in this important case; and it must be prepared to recognize and learn from these mistakes." (Mussa, M.: *Argentina and the Fund: From Triumph to Tragedy*, Buenos Aires, 2002).

cate a fundamental problem: can the reinforcement of imbalances be considered legitimate if the poorest social groups also benefit from the overall trend? To what extent has their situation improved in this way over the past two decades? What are the perspectives opened for the poor by current developments? We intend to confront those in positions of political and social responsibility with these questions in order to promote human development.

Overall conditions excluding poor countries from shaping world economic processes contradict the Christian understanding of participation and justice. This includes the dismantling of structural causes of injustice.

2.3 Seeking a different kind of globalisation

In the light of the problematic effects of economic liberalism, many people in the South and North are asking for a “different” type of globalisation. The platform for this search is the World Social Forum (WSF), held for the fourth time in India in January 2004. The WSF is a counter-event held almost at the same time as the Economic Summit in Davos, attended by the heads of governments and economic leaders. The WSF motto is: “Another world is possible”. The forum criticizes the one-sided economic orientation of globalisation and offers hope for an alternative which, however, has only been vaguely sketched so far.

3. Church challenges

3.1 The theological/ethical challenge

The visible effects of globalisation primarily result from increasingly liberalized economic action. The system of a globalized economy currently lacks a clear incorporation in politics. This would require a new moral basis going beyond vague ideas about social justice as generating justice and compensating for injustice. It would mean a paradigm shift, the critical discussion of social ethical categories of freedom, justice and political solidarity. These fundamental ethical decisions determine the relationship of the economy, human beings and society.

It is part of the church's calling to attempt to clarify this dimension of the way we understand human beings and society. Thus the churches have to refer in particular to the fundamental principles of economic liberalism, as – in the words of the 1934 Barmen Theological Declaration – there are no areas of our life in which we do not belong to Jesus Christ but to other lords, or areas in which we do not need justification and sanctification through him (Barmen II).

The church is faced with the task of getting involved in a supposedly “purely technical discussion”.

Wherever those with political responsibility insist that the globalisation of markets does not allow for any alternative, the churches have to critically object on the basis of their confession of faith in God, the creator of justice and righteousness who turns to the poor and weak in a special way. Constantly referring to constraints in the field of economic action entails the obvious risk of clinging to an absolute, unquestioning belief in certain economic strategies. In contrast to this, churches must contribute their insights on social, economic and environmentally sustainable action, couched in new terms in keeping with the times.

3.2 Christian understanding of reality and economic liberalism – differences in perspective and obstacles to understanding

Economic liberalism is problematic when the market principle aims not only at ordering economic activity but also at determining all spheres of social, political life in society. This entails the risk of markets turning into an end rather than a means.

Currently there are many obstacles to understanding between the critics and those who see economic liberalism as the way to shape world economic processes. There is a fundamental discussion about the interrelationship of politics and the economy, and above all about the way to shape the overall framework for social security sys-

tems in the public's best interest. In this respect, there are two contrasting regulatory theories, i.e.:

- control via centralised national bureaucracies, or
- control via market systems determined by decentralized decision-making.

In many debates, this alternative is understood as a fundamental contrast of political models. It hampers thinking and discussion, and frequently also leads to political roadblocks. These obstacles must be overcome, so that policy-making can go ahead. A more specific question is when to presume a failure of government and when to presume a failure of the market. This question must be analyzed both in Germany and worldwide.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, such a model was successfully introduced with the concept of the “social market economy”. It combined a functional political framework and the requirements of a market economy. In a historical perspective, this regulatory model was an attempt to reconcile liberal economic approaches with the justice-related ideas of Christian churches and the workers' movement in the post-1945 period. The understanding of the social market economy, – as pointed out by the 1997 Joint Statement of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and the German Bishops' Conference on the Economic and Social Situation in Germany (“For a Future Founded on Solidarity and Justice”), depended and continues to depend on the understanding that “economic success and social balance are goals of equal rank and that each has to be seen as a precondition for the other” (para. 143).

The concept of “social market economy” had been expressed beforehand by the Protestant-led ideas of the dissident Freiburg Memorandum and the Kreisau group, later known as the ‘ordoliberalism’ of the Freiburg School. Its chief aim was to safeguard the pre-eminence of human beings in economic action. The economic order must in particular respect the personal dignity of individuals by guaranteeing their rights and responsibilities. The Kreisau and Freiburg groups saw this order as existing in a competitive system characterized by total competition with a strong government fixing the overall framework. A system of central administration would run the risk of eliminating individual personalities and promoting corruption; pure capitalism leads to the formation of monopolies and oligopolies¹³, – power systems which cannot be kept under control. By contrast, the competitive system stimulates responsible action, grants the freedom of consumption and thus guarantees a general supply of goods in an extremely efficient manner. By means of broadly based ownership, rights of co-determination (participation in decision-making) and possibly profit sharing schemes for employees, where appropriate, individual re

13 Oligopolies: markets with only few suppliers (currently a widespread market form).

sponsibility should be facilitated at all levels of economic action. In accordance with these concepts, the competitive system had to be fundamentally supplemented by national economic policy and a social system. The government had to play a crucial role, above all safeguarding and maintaining the principle of competition.

This model which, in view of the new challenges, currently requires “structural and moral renewal” which “must fundamentally aim for a market economy that is socially, ecologically and globally committed” (ibid., para. 11), continues to be exemplary concerning the correlation between the legitimate concerns of economic liberalism and the Christian ideas of justice and solidarity. Right now it is important to build on this attempt to reconcile these approaches and come up with ways of enabling life in dignity, life in fullness for all.

In structural terms, these regulatory and ethical orientations have hitherto been based on nation states. Under globalisation conditions, this framework must be expanded. The question is how essential principles of these models are to be anchored at the level of international institutions so as to ensure a responsible management of globalisation.

3.3 Biblical justice, option for the poor, search for the well-being of creation in its entirety

Inspired by the Biblical promise whereby all shall have “life in fullness” (John 10:10), the question facing the church and each individual Christian is how to shape human and social action in accordance with the promise even though the world has not yet been redeemed.

The church as part of the people of God lives with the mission to preserve the story of God’s mercy and righteousness and to tell this story again and again. It is called upon continually to develop views and socially imaginative ideas on how justice can be done to the poor, vulnerable and marginalized.

The Joint Statement (quoted above) shows God’s merciful action in liberating the People of Israel from captivity in Egypt as being the prerequisite for the Ten Commandments as a system for people’s lives. They are instructions for life in dignity, freedom, justice and truth. They can thus be transferred to a discussion process outside the church.

Recalling the biblical understanding of justice and solidarity, the Joint Statement replaces the process of disintegration and loss of a caring society with a different kind of thinking and action. By recalling and retelling the story of God’s mercy we are motivated “to attend to the poor, weak and disadvantaged in mercy and solidarity” (para. 96).

On the basis of this tradition, the Joint Statement considers the Gospel of Jesus to be the renewal and fulfilment of the promise of the Old Testament of life for the “poor, small, meek and non-violent” (Mt 5:3–12; Lk 6:20–26). Paragraph 99 reads: “He himself trod the path of solidarity, mercy and non-violence. Due to his suffering and violent death, he showed solidarity with people in everything (Phil. 2.611).” In bonding itself to God and God’s solidarity, the church commits itself to solidarity and justice as one of its constituent features. Hence, the basic statements of the Judeo-Christian tradition contradict all situations calling for the “law of the strongest”. Instead, the political fashioning of justice and righteousness must be oriented towards an understanding of solidarity determined by interrelationship and interdependence. “People who feel bonds of solidarity recognise and pursue common interests, and refrain from seeking their own advantage when this would be at the expense of others or the community” (para. 116). Quoting the 1991 memorandum “The Common Good and Self-interest”, the Joint Statement also directly relates solidarity with social justice. “Searching for justice means approaching the poor and powerless living socially and economically marginalized lives and unable to improve their participation and involvement in society by themselves. Social justice thus rightfully implies advocacy for all those who depend on support and assistance ... It does not consist only of personal care for the disadvantaged but aims at dismantling the structural causes for the lack of participation and involvement in social and economic processes.”¹⁴

“Searching for justice means moving towards those who as the poor and powerless are marginalised in social and economic life and who cannot improve their share and participation in society in their own strength. Social justice has thus, and it is right that it should be so, the character of taking sides for all who are dependent on help and support ... It is not exhausted in personal care for the disadvantaged, but aims at the removal of the structural causes for the lack of sharing and participation in social and economic processes.”

The Joint Statement goes beyond this advocacy for the disadvantaged and the dismantling of structural exclusion mechanisms to include the “rights” of “future generations”. It thus also calls for “equal life opportunities” for those who do not participate or who do not have a corresponding say in the social debate.

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein” (Ps 24:1). “In biblical thinking, responsibility for creation is grounded in the idea of people being part of creation along with other fellow creatures (Gen 1-3, Ps 8;

¹⁴ *The Common Good and Self-Interest. A memorandum of the Evangelical Church in Germany, 1991, English version 1992, para. 155.*

104). They share the same destiny as all created life and have special responsibility for the rest of creation. They are supposed to till and care for the earth (Gen 2:15), i.e. make and keep it inhabitable. The special position of human beings does not mean that they have the right to treat non-human creation in an arbitrary or exploitative way. Rather, it commits them to a reverent stewardship of God's creation, based on care, economy and conservation" (para. 123).

3.4 Church action – ecclesiological challenges

In Christian discipleship, the church does not exist for itself. Its freedom is based on the mission to witness to all people in word and deed the good news of God's freely given mercy and liberating presence in our lives and our history (cf. Barmen VI). "That is why faith and life, proclamation and practice in the church should not be divided in the church's behaviour and in its message. Christians cannot share the bread at the Lord's Table without sharing their daily bread. An unworldly holiness would only create an unholy world. Working for human dignity and human rights, for justice and solidarity, is constitutive for the church; it derives this commitment from its faith in God's solidarity with people and from its mission to be a sign and tool of unity and peace in the world. In the endeavour to come closer and unite, divided churches strive to fulfil this mission and send signals of reconciliation" (para. 101). Baptism and the Eucharist are healing and unifying signs of a church that lives and works for renewed people.¹⁵

As the church of Jesus Christ we try to witness to the world by our very existence the truth of the promise given through baptism, whereby we participate in the one Body of Christ. This metaphor of the Body of Christ allows us to understand the meaning of comprehensive participation. In celebrating Holy Communion together, we are invited to share the life of the covenant which is experienced in God becoming human in Christ and which invites us to participate in God's purpose for the world. As a church which is structurally part of the western world, we are being called upon to change our ways, a move that at the present time primarily requires a self-critical approach vis-à-vis our own structures and ways of life. We are being called upon to critically analyze the ways in which we contribute to the threats to

¹⁵ *Baptism as baptism into the death of Christ has ethical consequences that do not just call for personal healing but motivate Christians to strive for the fulfilment of God's will in all areas of life (Romans 9:9 ff., Gal. 3:26-28; 1 Peter 2:21-4:6). (Baptism 10).*

"The Eucharist covers all aspects of life. It is a representative act of giving thanks and providing for the whole of the world ... All kinds of injustice, racism, separation and lack of freedom are radically challenged if we jointly participate in the Body and Blood of Christ. For through Eucharist, the all renewing mercy of God penetrates and restores human person and dignity." (Eucharist 20) (The church as a Eucharist community – steps on the way to unity. Committee II of the 6th Assembly of the WCC, report from Vancouver 1983, Official Report of the Sixth Assembly of the WCC, Frankfurt 1983, 75 f.).

people's lives in other parts of the world. As the community of the faithful we face up to the challenge of sharing what we are and what we have. We can show a visible sign of our communion as the Body of Christ if we use our resources to enable the most disadvantaged groups in both poor and rich countries to participate in the process of developing social justice. We are therefore committed to introducing instruments and mechanisms that allow us to really share our resources with our brothers and sisters in *one world*.

As the church of Jesus Christ, we are also called upon to raise the Christian perspective in the social debate about justice. The understanding of love in the New Testament goes far beyond a concept of justice of "to each his own". The concept of love breaks through all ideas that try to identify justice with equality, ignoring the diversity intended by God. Love is the response to the fact that God has created us as different persons. It is a particularly strong manifestation of our interdependence. The metaphor of the Body of Christ states that all partake in this body, all are mutually dependent on one another and nobody must be lost.

In this respect, we need a wider concept of justice. We have to ask ourselves whether our investing in institutions enabling people to live, (e.g. especially socialization, education and research) over and above traditional distributive justice, is not an expression of an expanded concept of justice. Another vital question is whether our commitment to the promotion of economic and social development for all people so as to improve their options in life is not an expression of participatory justice.

Calling for comprehensive human rights for *all* people is a consequence of our belief in the communion of the Body of Christ in which all live in mutual responsibility for one another. In this respect, we advocate individual economic and social rights such as the right to life and the right to work.

In a worldwide ecumenical process, the churches today advocate the creation of economic and social justice for *all* people on the basis of free and participatory¹⁶ structures. They also support people in linking their own fight for social and economic justice and freedom with the worldwide struggle for social and economic human rights.

Life on the earth is part of a delicate network of complex interrelations. When the ecological repercussions of economic globalisation adversely affect this network of life created (Rom. 8), God as the creator of life suffers with his creation. It is in conformity with the actions of God as the creator, preserver, liberator and redeemer of

16 Participatory: oriented towards the participation of all those affected.

life in all its diversity if the Church and Christians cooperate with one another and with particularly threatened ethnic communities (indigenous peoples) and with social and ecological movements and other faith communities, both globally and locally, to fight the life-threatening negative environmental effects of globalisation and to develop sustainable alternatives.

As early as in 1980, the United Nations adopted its “Earth Charter”¹⁷ in which it was agreed that nature has an inherent value which all human activities must respect. In the context of economic liberalization, the churches must point out clearly that the Earth is not owned by humanity. Creation does not belong to people; rather, people are part of creation and the Earth is the Lord’s.

Justice also includes the relationship between humanity and nature, the call for environmental justice. Environmental justice is not merely an ethical or political demand but also an expression of the Christian belief that the world is God’s creation. The churches therefore have to seriously consider God’s will and actions with regard to the integrity of creation. They have to ask: what does this mean for our action in church and society when we work for sustainable development based on social and ecological justice and solidarity?

*17 A document setting out fundamental ethical principles of sustainable development.
(www.umweltdatenbank.de/lexikon/erd-charta.htm).*

4. Starting points for change and levels of involvement

The Christian understanding of freedom as the freedom of self-restraint conforms to the guiding principle of *sustainability*. *Sustainable development* aims to ensure that people all over the world live, work and do business in a way that allows all people – in the North and South, both current and future generations – to live in dignity without destroying the Earth’s natural resources.

The Global protection of nature and the environment, the fight against poverty, the promotion of education and training, the strengthening of non-governmental organizations and thus of democratic participation rights, are the basis for sustainable development.

Thus, purely economic globalisation is contrasted with a different principle. It is committed to the socio-ethical principle of solidarity and justice between the strong and the weak, between present and future generations. It calls upon us to adopt a new approach in handling the perception of differences¹⁸ and show a responsible outlook on freedom, in solidarity with our fellow human beings and the rest of creation.

Sustainable development focuses on empowerment and participatory justice: the self-reliant and free participation of all in social and political processes, free access to education, participation, the solution of problems involving all those affected.

The Joint Statement of the EKD Council and the German Bishops’ Conference at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 (“Rio+10”) reads: “The Christian churches support a worldwide agreement on the ethical bases of a sustainable society, including the recognition of the inherent value of all creatures, commitment to the inalienable dignity of human beings, initiatives for a responsible shaping of globalisation and advocacy of justice for the poorest of the poor and for future generations. In the framework of the ecumenical process for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, the churches have dealt with essential elements of sustainable development. The guiding principle of sustainable development forms the core of Christian social ethics.”

In this context, different levels of action and different agents must be considered:

1. The framework of (world) economic development is determined by national and international policies (global governance). National policies shape the relationship between the economy and society (regulatory policies). The United Nations

¹⁸ *Perception of differences: the deliberate perception of differences between genders, cultures, generations.*

is responsible for the universal wording of human rights standards and must ensure that they are adhered to. The political level, human rights standards also have to be applied to the operations of international institutions (UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization).

2. At the intermediate level, institutions and organizations must be named that in one way or another are faced with the task of implementing and specifically shaping standards which have been worded in general terms. They primarily include companies operating both nationally and internationally, but also trade unions, non-governmental organizations, churches and other religious groups. The latter have to exert – in particular public – influence to ensure that human rights standards are complied with.
3. Last but not least, each individual is responsible as a citizen, voter and consumer. By means of our decisions about what to buy, we have an impact on compliance with human rights standards.

4.1 Societal, economic and social policies

4.1.1 Sustainable development

As the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, we advocate sustainable development

- that shows that the dignity of human beings is inalienable and that the inherent value of God's creation goes beyond its economic usability,
- that combines and integrates the ecological, economic and social dimensions of life,
- whose credibility depends on the global realization of the socio-ethical principle of granting priority to the poor, distributive justice and justice between present and future generations.

We are committed, in particular, to ensuring

- that the principle of sustainable development is implemented in politically and socially effective strategies,
- that in contrast to thinking along the lines of short-term returns (shareholder value), consideration is given to the development of companies in their entirety, including the development of personnel and environmental matters,
- that workers are not only regarded as a cost factor and a pure resource, i.e. labour,
- that a reform of energy policies in our country and also worldwide facilitates effective climate protection and allows us to overcome the energy deficiency of 2 billion people in the world. We consider our country – as all other industrialized countries – to be obliged to adopt a pioneering role by means of moderate lifestyles, rational and efficient energy utilization and the consistent use of renewable energies,
- that our church congregations and church facilities introduce environmental management systems, contribute to the further development of resources and cli

mate protection¹⁹, and that both issues are tackled in the framework of our church partnerships,

- that a sustainable form of agriculture is carried out, i.e. an ecologically and socially just agriculture free from genetic engineering, that genetically modified foodstuffs are not consumed in church facilities and that genetic engineering does not take place on church land,
- that support is given to initiatives promoting sustainable development in the form of processes related to the Agenda 21.²⁰

4.1.2 Social, ecological and cultural human rights

Human rights aim to protect the life, freedom and dignity of every human being by means of international agreements. The first generation of human rights²¹ tried above all to establish the civil and political rights and fundamental freedoms of the individual. The second and third generations of human rights expanded human rights to include social, ecological and cultural human rights. However, human rights actually relate not only to individuals but also societies, peoples and their economic relationships.

Human rights form the basis on which civil society may develop and prosper both socially, economically and ecologically.

Defining economic and social human rights will initially require the formulation of minimum standards. A distinction will have to be drawn between universal, indispensable thresholds not to be undercut and specific local situations. Those two levels may certainly be characterized by tension; however, universal minimum standards and specific local human rights must not be contradictory but have to be compatible.

The aim is to call for the indivisibility of human rights as a binding feature in shaping globalisation, rather than playing the different forms of human rights off against one another. The churches interrelated in ecumenism are faced with the task of calling for and contributing to the shaping of global human rights awareness. This task includes assistance for the victims of human rights violations and public support for their concerns.

*19 E.g. by means of participation in the "Green Cock" campaign
(www.kirchliches-umweltmanagement.de).*

20 Such as e.g. the regional agenda projects "Fair Play – Fair Life" concerning the 2006 World Football Championship and "The economy has AIDS, too".

21 Universal Declaration of Human Rights – United Nations General Assembly, 10 December 1948.

When it comes to shaping globalisation, the following social, economic, ecological and cultural human rights will play a particular role, besides the classical civil liberties:

- equal opportunities for men and women,
- protection from enslaving work,
- the right to work in dignity,
- fundamental rights of participation,
- the right to health care and education,
- and responsibility for the life support systems of future generations.

4.1.3 World trade – fundamental questions of economic policy

4.1.3.1 World trade, international organizations and conventions (WTO²², ILO²³, IMF, World Bank, GATS²⁴, TRIPS²⁵)

The rules of world trade are determined by international organizations, in which a small number of countries, including countries of the European Union, have a disproportionately strong influence. The world's developing countries and emerging economies are both underrepresented in terms of their influence and in many cases are faced with an excessive financial strain preventing them from appropriately asserting their concerns and interests. The European Union has an important role here in helping to shape global economic, development and trade policy.

Campaigns such as the Jubilee 2000 or the “Clean Clothes Campaign”, initiated or strongly supported by the churches, advocate for changes to achieve fair and just trade. This commitment has become necessary due to the impact of globalisation.

22 WTO: World Trade Organization, formed as the successor organization to GATT in January 1995, headquartered in Geneva. It currently (2001) has more than 130 members. The aim of the WTO is first and foremost to promote free world trade by means of the abolition of customs duties and other trade obstacles. The WTO monitors international trade practices and acts as an arbitrator in the event of disputes (www.umwelt-datenbank.de/lexikon/welthandelsorganisation.htm).

23 International Labour Organization (ILO): The International Labour Organization is the UN specialised agency for internationally accepted human and labour rights and social justice. The ILO formulates international labour standards in the form of conventions and recommendations and fixes minimum standards in fundamental labour rights (cf. www.ilo.org).

24 GATS: General Agreement on Trade in Services, an agreement of the WTO (World Trade Organization) member states for the liberalization of the services sector. It is opened up to competition with virtually no limits, with governments losing most means to regulate the market. The agreement is binding for all decision-making and governmental levels (www.gats.de).

25 TRIPS: Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property rights: the protection and implementation of intellectual property rights are to promote technological innovation and the transfer and distribution of technology, to the mutual benefit of the producers and users of technological knowledge and knowhow, and the compensation of rights and duties in a way conducive to both social and economic wellbeing (<http://www.jusline.at/tripsa.html>).

Many congregations, church districts and the regional church with their offices and agencies are members or supporters of these campaigns. They provide regular information and discussion forums, and encourage people to get actively involved.

As the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, we consider ourselves to be obliged to inform people about the structures and working methods of international organizations (ILO, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization) and thus to help them gain an understanding of the differentiated relationship between unjust economic structures and the relationship between wealth and poverty. The aim is to identify macro-economic approaches that facilitate an economy in the service of life.

In order to achieve this goal we call upon the regional government of North Rhine Westphalia to commit itself to the establishment of chairs of economic ethics at the faculties of economics in North Rhine Westphalia. The design of an economy in the service of life today requires a differentiated ethical analysis and training in fundamental questions related to economic policy and theory:

- What kind of relationship between the economy and society needs to be developed? What does an up-to-date economic regulatory policy look like? What is today's normative relationship between the business-related, entrepreneurial dimension of the economy and the macro-economic perspective that shapes the overall framework and the common good? What instruments of economic policy can be used to prevent the impairment of a sustainable economy by liberalized markets?
- How can economic debate and training open up to the demands resulting from the social tasks of an economy in the service of life? How can fundamental ethical issues be taught? What ethical skills do business executives need for global management?
- On what conditions can companies contribute to social costs? What overall conditions have to prevail to promote the social and ecological responsibility of entrepreneurial action?
- What are the inherent value dimensions of fundamental economic categories such as freedom, benefit, labour, performance, market, state, welfare state, growth, free trade, etc.? What are the historical contexts they have to be associated with, and how can they be further developed in the context of globalisation?
- What are the theological and ethical challenges to a society and an economy characterized by Christian values in view of an increase in secularization on the one hand and an increasing dominance of economics on living conditions on the other?
- What are the ethical questions of globalisation resulting from a cultural comparison with economic systems fundamentally characterized by Islamic, Buddhist/Hinduist, Black African etc. orientations?

As the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, we consider ourselves to be obliged to hold discussions with political decision-makers to encourage the Federal Republic of Germany to bring its influence to bear to ensure that

- social and ecological criteria are integrated in the GATS negotiations on the liberalization of trade and services in areas of general interest (water, health care, education). Liberalization is a tool of economic policy, the application of which ultimately needs to be the subject of a political decision that takes account of social and ecological criteria. In this regard, a well-functioning legal system is an indispensable controlling body. The negotiations must be opened up to include the issues debated by civil society at large, and have to be conducted in a transparent manner. If These conditions are not met, the negotiations must be suspended.
- patent laws on medical drugs are restricted if this move facilitates access to lifesaving drugs for millions of people such as in the case of HIV/AIDS. This would be possible, inter alia, by means of facilitating access to compulsory licenses contained in the TRIPS agreement. We expressly welcome the fact that the compromise adopted in Cancún is being continued for the countries affected by the AIDS pandemic which do not have a domestic pharmaceutical industry. It allows for imports of low-cost generic drugs²⁶ if the countries are not able to manufacture their own AIDS drugs.
- under the TRIPS agreement potential patents on living organisms are ruled out. Patents on crops entail the risk of letting agriculture become dependent on a handful of multinational corporations. Patent protection undermines the free exchange of seeds, which forms the very basis for the livelihood of the peasants. The issue at stake is agricultural freedom for farmers, in particular peasants, to continue the unrestricted use of their traditional crops which have adjusted to the respective sites.
- staple foodstuffs are excluded from the negotiations of the world trade agreement so as to ensure that poor countries can secure the subsistence of their population by means of subsidies, if necessary, and protect their peasant agriculture from imports.
- that the precautionary principle applies worldwide, i.e. the use of a product or a new process is suspended or restricted until it is scientifically proved to be quite safe.
- the efforts of the World Council of Churches be supported to engage in a critical dialogue with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to achieve progress with regard to fundamental reforms of the international financial institutions as tools for the international monitoring and shaping of the glob

26 Generics have been defined as medical drugs whose patent protection has expired and which are offered under a chemical abbreviation, a so-called generic name, instead of the trademark which continues to be protected. (www.wissen.de).

alisation process in accordance with the guiding principle of sustainable development. We consider the Millennium Development Goals²⁷ to halve world poverty, in particular, to be the test for the credibility of the international financial institutions.

- the IMF and the World Bank be reformed with regard to a democratization of voting rights, transparency and accountability, and that the relationship between World Bank and IMF on the one hand and the United Nations on the other be reviewed with a view to introducing an overall concept of global sustainable control of the globalisation process.
- a tax on foreign currency trading (Tobin tax²⁸) be introduced.
- the 1969 ILO Convention for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples be ratified by Germany, hence achieving a breakthrough for the preservation of the cultural, humanitarian and economic rights of indigenous peoples in globalisation.

4.1.3.2 Privatization of public responsibility for basic services

Since the 1990s, basic public services for the population (water, health care, education, energy and transport) have increasingly been privatized, both in Germany and worldwide.

In many cases, privatization is effected without consideration of the required ecological and social framework. Hence, social pre-conditions for basic public services are being undermined.

The provision of public goods requires a clear framework and an assessment of the ecological impact.

This requires a clear framework and an assessment of the social and ecological impact. Every individual should be able to use these fundamental services in a sufficient quality.

As the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, we will

- increasingly discuss the relationship between the state and the market in the field of basic public services at events organized by us and get actively involved in the political debate.
- advocate for access to clean water for all people. We support the “Water – a human right” campaign run by *Bread for the World*. Water is a vital gift of God

²⁷ Cf. 1.1 Introduction.

²⁸ A tax on foreign currency transactions, proposed by the American Nobel laureate James Tobin; it would render foreign currency speculation more expensive and thus make it less attractive and yields could be used to finance public tasks.



which everybody is entitled to. Privatization in the water industry therefore must be subject to democratic decision-making and oriented towards social and ecological criteria, ensuring the provision of access to clean water for all people.

- promote a health care system that makes health care accessible to all people. Sufficient medical care must not be a matter of personal income, gender or status. Every human being has a right to health care (Article 25 Human Rights). This is why we call for an expansion of research into tropical diseases and an intensification of the development of new drugs.²⁹
- in this context, we would like to point out that gender mainstreaming³⁰ forms a set of tools called for – e.g. by the WHO – to identify and remedy different standards of supply and medical check-ups. Although many research reports already indicate that diseases develop differently in men and women and thus should also be treated differently, this is hardly ever taken into account in health policy concepts. The gender perspective should also be applied in analysing the social dimension of any disease. The daily global mortality of pregnant women is 1,400. Good and accessible health care for all women during pregnancy and childbirth should be a priority in health systems all over the world.
- advocate a system of education based on a holistic approach. According to the ecumenical understanding, education also includes the provision of points of orientation, besides factual knowledge and specific job-related knowledge. Education must be accessible to everybody and must not depend on the financial assets of the individual or his/her parents. Every human being has a right to education (Article 26 Human Rights). This particularly needs to be stressed regarding girls and women in countries of the South. Two-thirds of those who cannot read and write are female.³¹ In order to eliminate the established correlation between belonging to a specific social class and frequently considerable skill deficits, the promotion of education needs to be substantially improved with a view to offsetting any social and regional inequalities in the starting conditions. For this reason we particularly need appropriate programmes for social education in schools.³²

4.1.3.3 Paid work and basic level of protection

As early as 1997, in their Joint Statement “For a future in solidarity and justice”, the German Catholic and Protestant Churches called for “an extension of the scope of economic policy-making to take account of the trend towards globalisation”, (para. 147) with specific reference to social security. This must be called for and implemented today.

29 Only 1 % of new drugs related to tropical diseases over the past 25 years.

30 Gender mainstreaming means that the different life situations and interests of women and men are regularly considered in all social projects, right from the outset.

31 Human Development Report 2004.

32 Cf. Humandienstleistungen gerecht gestalten. Ein Beitrag zur Zukunft der Arbeit. EKvW Regional Church Office (ed.), July 2004, p. 25.

Against this background, we commit ourselves

- to raise an awareness of the biblical perspective of life with justice in the congregations and church districts by means of church services, education and campaigns,
- to participate at various levels of social dialogue, seeking the common good and pointing out in particular the effects of economic and political decisions on the vulnerable members of society as our contribution to the discussion,
- to deliberately involve companies and trade unions located in Westphalia in discussions and initiatives,
- to understand the option for the poor as an urgent impetus, in view of the changes in the labour market, to publicly promote fundamental and sustainable reforms in the organization and distribution of paid work and minimum income for securing people's livelihood. The aim is to achieve a just distribution of employment opportunities, i.e. working hours and income, between men and women and between people with different capabilities and talents. Equal opportunities for lifelong learning and a wider choice of different employment contracts may contribute to achieving this aim. In order to ensure that all people obtain an appropriate share in income from employment and the related social standing, the labour market and social policies need to be reformed in a more fundamental way than has hitherto been the case. This dual strategy is the only way to secure the "social integration" of all people. That is why a public debate on the implementation of this dual strategy is required.
- to accept, as a challenge to our Protestant economic and social ethics, the experience that full employment in the sense of "life-long full-time employment for all" has ceased to be a realistic goal, and to join or initiate the public debate about changes in our understanding of full employment with different options. This call for a redistribution of work is derived from the view that the current distribution of employment opportunities, in particular the uneven distribution of the risk of unemployment is socially unjust and must be taken into account in the understanding of work as a "fundamental element of human livelihood" in social ethics, for reasons of justice.

4.2 Organizations and companies

4.2.1 *Ecumenical partnerships*

As the Evangelical Church of Westphalia, we have maintained ecumenical relationships with partner churches in Asia and Africa, North and South America, eastern and western Europe for many years. They are all affected by the effects of globalisation, albeit to different extents.

As we support our partners based on the worldwide solidarity of the one church of Christ, we commit ourselves

- to engage in a regular exchange of information on the impact of globalisation in our countries and agree on joint action,
- to jointly work on the related theological questions and challenges facing us with regard to our understanding of faith and church,
- to provide them with a forum to voice their experience in the form of invitations, publications and lobbying activities,
- to lobby our government for the remission of debts that cannot be served by the countries affected,
- to encourage and promote studies concerning individual partner countries and issues³³,
- to support human rights activities³⁴,
- to promote programmes and projects within our churches that enable people to actively support human rights, justice, peace and the integrity of creation,
- to foster technological exchange and the exchange of experts between our church and its partner churches,
- to publicly outlaw all forms of trafficking in human beings and launch joint prevention programmes and initiatives with our ecumenical partner churches and to support the victims³⁵,
- to support campaigns related to the World Trade Organizations (WTO) aimed at creating more just economic structures worldwide.

4.2.2 Global co-responsibility of companies: UN Global Compact

In 2000, Kofi Annan, General Secretary of the United Nations, initiated a campaign called “Global Compact” as part of the strategy to implement the Millennium Development Goals. It aims at motivating companies operating on an international level to increasingly consider questions related to environmental protection, social responsibility and the protection of human rights in their operations. The global balance of power between politics, the private sector of the economy and civil society has changed. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and companies play a major role in these new global partnerships. Some German companies have already joined the Compact, including companies operating in the region of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia.

33 Such as the SÜDWIND studies on Congo and Argentina: Südwind e.V.: “Kongo: Handys, Gold & Diamanten. Kriegsfinanzierung im Zeitalter der Globalisierung”, Siegburg, May 2004; “Argentinien: Tangotanz auf dem Vulkan”, Siegburg, January 2004.

34 E.g. express letter campaigns and legal aid provided by the United Evangelical Mission and the Third World Information Center in Herne.

35 Cf. mandate to the Standing Committee for World Mission, Ecumenism and World Responsibility by the 2003 Regional Synod.

The Evangelical Church of Westphalia

- welcomes this initiative launched by the United Nations,
- intends to encourage the perception and expansion of local approaches for dialogue between the private sector of the economy and civil society,
- points out that given very different levels of commitment in the companies involved, this kind of voluntary self-commitment cannot replace international legally binding framework parameters.

4.2.3 Church and social service agencies as employers

In its social services, the church expresses its life and character. The daily signs of compassion and the many elements of support in people's everyday lives based on small and large-scale initiatives are complemented by the professional services offered by the social service agencies. These put people at the centre. Thus, the dignity of every human being must be maintained and protected from the cradle to the grave. That is why all professional services are always complemented by social policy lobbying activities vis-à-vis municipalities and *länder* and at the federal level.

We know that many of the social service agencies³⁶ are faced with a strong cost and competitive pressure. If their work has to be further restricted or even discontinued in the future, this will affect social peace in our country. We therefore advocate the strengthening and maintenance of these activities.

In this regard, the following features have to be taken into account:

In contrast to companies with a commercial orientation, the social service agencies have a special mission to serve the propagation of the gospel in word and deed. At the same time, they are employers and thus subjected to current industrial law. As the church, we cannot publicly call for sustainable development without considering our own economic activities. This is a matter concerning our own credibility³⁷.

However, at the same time social service agencies are affected by economic restraints and possibilities for funding their work which they cannot determine themselves. The consequences contradict people's sense of justice: the outsourcing of certain areas of work with its substantial long-term effects for the employees concerned, or cuts in wages despite collective agreements, in particular in the lower wage brackets. However, since the church will have to continue to face its responsibility in the social service sector as outlined above, these questions have to be resolved on the basis of responsibility for our mission. It is precisely the continuation

³⁶ *Facilities for people with disabilities, hospitals run by the churches, counselling services, day nurseries,*

old people's homes, day hospitals or care facilities for homeless people, etc.

³⁷ Cf. *Joint Statement (ibid.)*. "Church commitment to changes in society will be all the more convincing

if it is visible in the church itself" (para. 243).

of activities to meet this responsibility that allows the church and its social service agencies to continue to render a credible contribution to society.

We commit ourselves to continue

- to assist people as Jesus did, disregarding the status of the person concerned, to respect their dignity and help them assert their rights,
- to promote projects that strengthen both the Christian profile and the competitiveness of social service agencies (hospitals, old people's homes),
- to engage in advocacy for the weakest members of our society and lobbying in the political and social arena on their behalf,
- to double our efforts in development policies to tackle the root causes of poverty, war and refugee movements in those places where the people concerned live.

4.2.4 Handling church funds

As the Evangelical Church of Westphalia we consider the responsible handling of financial transactions to be part of our ethics and we therefore reaffirm that we will take account of ethical criteria in our investments.

We therefore welcome the commitment of our regional church to the "INIK" fund³⁸, an investment fund set up in accordance with economic, ecological and socio-ethical criteria.

We welcome the fact that numerous church districts, congregations and our regional church hold shares in Oikocredit, the ecumenical development cooperative. It grants loans to groups in the poor population strata in countries of the South and East to promote sustainable development in these countries: investing in justice.

We take action to ensure

- that the ecumenical obligation of sharing what we are and what we have will remain on the agendas of our synods and parish councils,³⁹
- that ethical criteria are applied in handling church funds at all levels and that the process to invest church funds in sustainable investment projects will be continued,
- that our church will do everything it can to continue to support the work of Oikocredit and publicly promote this concern in our congregations and the public at large.

³⁸ INIK: *Initiative für nachhaltiges Investment der Kirche - initiative for sustainable church investment.*

³⁹ Cf. *negotiations of the first (ordinary) meeting of the 12th Regional Synod in Westphalia from 9–13 November 1993, p. 244.*

4.3 Civil and voluntary commitment

Economic and cultural globalisation also poses a global challenge to people's chances of democratic participation. As a church, we advocate a systematic strengthening of democratic rights of participation. As the report of the committee of inquiry "The future of civil commitment" shows, voluntary public welfare work is an indispensable prerequisite for social cohesion. With their voluntary work in all spheres of social life, citizens renew the social fabric day after day. They thus create an atmosphere of solidarity, affiliation and mutual trust.

The multi-faceted voluntary commitment in our church must go beyond its important social dimension and increasingly also influence policy-making.

The EKvW Synod encourages the church members, congregations and church districts to step up their contribution to and involvement in the development of the local community.

The assertion of human rights and the integrity of creation are not conceivable without personal involvement on the part of citizens.

- As customers, all citizens have the opportunity to give preference to fairly traded products over other products.
- The awarding of labels such as Transfair, Flower Label or RUGMARK and Arbeit plus shows appreciation of relevant companies and products. We call upon the church to strive for social and ecological compatibility at all levels of its activities and to take into account the labels which provide information about the compatibility of these products (flowers, paper, cleaning agents, etc.). Public pressure can be built up and exerted by means of public criticism of companies. In this regard, the EKvW supports all forms of civil commitment aimed at supporting ecological and social minimum standards in the production of goods.
- Fairly traded products are consumed at church events (coffee, tea, wine, juice, etc.). The church continues to use *Fair Trade* products as a token of the bonds with our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.
- We advocate consideration of sustainable criteria in any investment transaction.
- We encourage support for and the purchasing of shares in Oikocredit.
- We ask our members as consumers to buy fairly traded goods and to take into account social standards in the production of their purchases.
- We call upon people to take environmentally sustainable decisions concerning private and business travel and construction and renovation projects, to counteract the increasing consumption of raw materials and non-renewable energies.

5. Conclusion

In our response to the Soesterberg Letter we have tried seriously to address the questions of our worldwide ecumenical partner churches and the problems in our own country related to globalisation. The gap between North and South, rich and poor, powerful and powerless, is threatening to widen and increasingly alienate us all over the world. The complexity of the problems and the magnitude of the challenges may place an excessive strain on us and perhaps cause us to give up hope. It is therefore even more important for us to mutually encourage one another in our local congregations and the worldwide ecumenical community of churches and to take steps to overcome these divisions, with the help of the Holy Spirit and as a sign of hope for the world. Witnessing to our Christian faith requires us to offer spiritual and practical resistance to economic injustice and ecological destruction, as Christians and as churches, and to do everything we can to promote an economy in the service of life both globally and in our own country. To this end, our spirituality needs to be deepened and our lives transformed, as promised by Jesus Christ.

In order to be able to do so, we have a special source of power, a prayer that spans the entire world: the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is the common prayer expressing the special identity of the worldwide community of Jesus Christ as a new human community. We may address God as our Father because Jesus, the son of God, has become our brother.

In this context, the fourth and fifth requests are particularly important:

“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.” (Matt. 6:11–12).

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

The fourth request emphasizes the fact that the resources we obtain for our daily lives are a gift from God. He gives us what we need, and we are accountable to him for the way we handle these resources. God ensures the survival of all of humanity. Thus, the expression “our bread” in the fourth request is not only related to the obligation of all Christians to share all resources and make sure that economic justice prevails. Rather, this expression also signals their responsibility to fight injustice wherever it occurs. “Our bread” is “bread for the world”, which must not be accumulated and amassed in the hands of a few at the expense of others.

For Christians in the 21st century, the fourth request is a constant reminder of their responsibility to contribute to economic justice for all people. They should do so according to their wealth and the talents with which they have been endowed – individually and as communities – both in their own society and in international economic relationships.

Since the early days of the church, Christians have related the fourth request for their daily bread with the celebration of Holy Communion. Jesus chooses bread, the most common food of his time, on which the survival of humanity depends, and wine, the symbol of life in fullness and celebration, as the sign of his presence as the Lord risen among his people. He does not only want to physically preserve the community of his followers but also to give a sense of direction to their lives. Time and again, he supplies them with God's forgiveness and gives them the power to facilitate fundamental change in human relationships.

In sharing bread and wine, we participate in the life in fullness which Jesus Christ gave his life for. At the same time, he engages us in his service of life. This also irrevocably obliges us Christians in the richer countries to commit ourselves to resolutely work towards a just and fair international economic order in which no one has to starve and all can live a life in dignity and fullness.

“And forgive us our sins.”

The fifth request convinces us of the fact that Christians who have experienced God's forgiveness in its deepest form have powerful resources enabling them to contribute to peace and justice in human relationships. In order for the churches to make a useful contribution to globalisation with a human face, we have to confess our guilt and trust in God's forgiveness, made real in Holy Communion.

As we share in the bread and wine in the presence of the risen Christ, we partake of God's transforming power and hence we are taken into the divine service of life. God wants everybody to have life in fullness. This nurtures our hope. Trusting in this promise, the Lord's Prayer ends:

“For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, for ever and ever. Amen.”

3. Decisions on the Response of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia to the Soesterberg Letter

Decision 1:

Synod adopts the response to the Soesterberg Letter in the amended

form. Decision 2:

Synod requests the Präses, parishes, church districts, church-related associations, offices and agencies to publicise the Response to the Soesterberg Letter and to motivate them to act on its proposals as best they can.

It also invites them to enter into dialogue with representatives of the business community.

The church board is called upon to publish the Response in an appropriate form.

The church board is further requested to compile literature, materials and resources on the topic of globalisation for the different areas of church activity and target groups, and to draw up a list of speakers available for presentations.

Decision 3:

The church board is requested to offer the parishes, church districts, offices and agencies, and church-related associations assistance in 2005 with regard to handling church finances on the basis of ethical criteria, in order to continue at all levels the process already initiated by the regional church of investing funds in projects for sustainable development.

Decision 4:

Synod commissions the church board

1. to take action in connection with the UN Special Assembly in 2005 to effectively support the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in our church and in the public debate.
2. to ensure that resources are made available to parishes on the topic of "increasing quality of life for poor people".

Decision 5:

The church board is mandated to present to Synod in 2005 proposals for further action on implementing the goals formulated in the Response (to the Soesterberg Letter).

4. Globalisation

A different kind of globalisation – resistance and

opportunities Privatdozent Dr. Hans Diefenbacher 0. Introduction

When Dr. Möller asked me a few months ago to talk to you today about the issue of “globalisation”, I was not yet aware of the draft response to the “Soesterberg Letter”, prepared by a working group of your regional church. I would not go so far as to say that reading that document would obviate the need for my presentation. However, the text prepared by that working group offers new opportunities for my paper as I can now relate to the complex and competent discussion process taking place in your regional church. I would like to do so on the basis of five steps: – I would like to start with a few brief comments on the manifestations and con

cept of globalisation. I associate these comments with a proposition: one of the reasons why it is so difficult to discuss globalisation is that the development of the world economy is frequently interpreted by means of different, inherently logical and conclusive explanatory patterns which, however, are based on different fundamental assumptions and are therefore hard to bring together in one debate.

- I will then explain the proposition that a deliberate shaping of globalisation is required, in the framework of a dual strategy: as a move to impact politics with a view to changing the overall framework of the world economy, and as a specific way of shaping our own economic activity locally, in our municipality and the region in which we live.
- In the third and fourth steps, I will then provide a detailed outline of potential steps that may be taken to change the overall economic framework and our own practical activities.
- In my brief summary, I will deal with the question as to how realistic these proposals are.

1. Two world views: globalisation, neoliberalism and sustainable development

Whoever has spent any time dealing with the issue of globalisation will have a number of favourite examples of positive and negative, convincing and absurd manifestations of globalisation.

- In 2002, around 30,000 consignments with a total of 84 million live animals were cleared at Frankfurt airport – including nine million one-day-old chicks, which are frequently flown halfway around the world. The route from Santiago de Chile via Frankfurt to New York is one of the race-courses for these chicks, which may be shipped without any feed or water until they are 60 hours old.¹
- Average coffee consumption in Germany has been relatively constant over the past few years, at 6.7 to 6.9 kg per capita and annum. Related to average yields per hectare in the cultivation areas this means: every German citizen “uses” a plot of approx. 110 square metres to grow “his” or “her” coffee. A maximum of two out of these 110 square metres is used to grow Fair Trade coffee.²
- Columbia exports cut flowers worth more than €500,000 annually. For every bunch of flowers that you can buy over here in a supermarket or at a filling station at a price of €10 euros, 78 cents will get to Columbia. 7 cents out of these 10 euros are paid to the farm workers as their wage. This calculation is based on figures for the year 2000.³
- To continue the example of flowers: based on regular international contact, non-governmental organisations have developed a “Flower Label Programme” to guarantee more just working conditions to the producers in the countries of the south and to protect the environment. The Flower Label Programme comprises an international code of conduct for socially and environmentally compatible cut flower production, establishing, among other things, wages that secure people’s livelihood, gender equality, renunciation of the use of highly toxic chemicals and pesticides, compliance with health regulations and a ban on child labour and forced labour. In September 2004, just under 1,000 German flower shops offered flowers with the FLP label.⁴ Thus, there are alternatives – for producers above all when informed consumers take social and ecological criteria into account in their consumer decisions.
- The development of this programme was only possible due to regular international “bottom up” exchanges. This type of opportunities has been multiplied

1 Schubert, Wolfgang (2003): „Küken fliegen um die halbe Welt – die tierärztliche Grenzkontrollstelle am Flughafen“, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 17 Feb. 2003.

2 Diefenbacher, Hans/Wilhelmy, Stefan (2003): *Eine Welt Bilanz Aschaffenburg 2003*. Heidelberg/ Aschaffenburg: FEST/Stadt Aschaffenburg/Nord-Süd-Forum Aschaffenburg, 12. Cf. also Jakobowicz, Dan (2002): *Genuss und Nachhaltigkeit – Handbuch zur Veränderung des persönlichen Lebensstils*. Vienna: Promedia.

3 Pertwee, Jeremy (2000): *Production and marketing of flowers*. Doetinchem: Elsevier.

4 Cf. e.g. VAMOS e.V. Münster (2001): *Blumen Welten – der dornige Weg vom Feld zur Vase*. Münster: published by the author.

by the internet and the use of e-mail. The increasingly cheap transmission of information by means of state-of-the-art technologies facilitates new forms of organisation and trade, some of which require considerably reduced flows of materials and commodities.

Let me change perspective. Is there a common denominator for the term “globalisation”? First of all: the term “globalisation” did not emerge until after 1990. Prior to 1990 it was not found in any dictionary in the world. The 1997 edition of Brockhaus, a German encyclopedia, provides the following definition of globalisation:⁵ “Globalisation, buzzword used to designate the global penetration of markets, caused primarily by the increasing importance of international financial markets, world trade, the intensive international orientation of multinational corporations and fostered by new telecommunications technology and innovation in the finance sector.”

This definition is based on the economic dimension of globalisation. Indeed, economic interdependency has caused far-reaching change in the fabric of nations and continents. However, many cultural, partly inherently contradictory globalisation processes are to be observed, i.e. the increase in the cultural diversity in the sphere of life of the individual with a simultaneous decrease in global diversity. A similar phenomenon applies to the increase in the local diversity of goods – with a simultaneous decrease in global diversity, since a large number of varieties which were only of local relevance will presumably disappear from the market once and for all.⁶ Anywhere in the world, consumers may choose between apples from Lake Constance, Tyrol, Chile and South Africa, but out of the 600 varieties of apples sold in Hesse 50 years ago, only 40 are still available today.

However, the term “globalisation” is often used strategically, virtually as a “battle term”: Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker, who also chaired the relevant committee of inquiry of the German Bundestag, identifies the following “secondary purposes” of the term:⁷

- “Globalisation” is used as an excuse for national inaction or failure;
- the term is used to exert pressure on national governments or associations; – and it is used as an excuse for giving up hope, or sulking in a corner.
- In addition, the term “globalisation” is occasionally also used to denote phenomena which are not global at all, in particular regional formation of blocs that tend to exclude certain groups.”

⁵ Brockhaus (tr.): http://lernen.bildung.hessen.de/global/glob_einf/gbein_01/index_html (5 Nov. 2004).

⁶ Cf. Brunnhuber, Stefan/Klimenta, Harald (2003): *Wie wir wirtschaften werden*. Frankfurt/Vienna: Carl Ueberreuter, 17.

⁷ Weizsäcker, Ernst Ulrich von (2004): *Was ist Globalisierung und wie erklärt sie sich?*, on the internet (in German) at www.globalisierung-online.de (2 Nov. 2004).

According to v. Weizsäcker, these problems should be borne in mind in analysing the political phenomenon of globalisation and discussing a rational approach to this phenomenon.

Let us change perspective again. More than 11 years ago, in a paper given in Brussels on 4 March 1993, the then Director of the International Monetary Fund Michel Camdessus listed the following six points as the key problems of the global economy:⁸

- Most of the OECD countries suffer from low growth rates;
- turbulences on the foreign exchange markets have destabilised the world's monetary system;
- tension in world trade relationships has increased;
- economic success in the transition of the eastern European countries to a market economy is very slow;
- there is no indication at all of an improvement in the economic malaise in about half the developing countries;
 - there is a crisis of confidence in the effectiveness of international organisations.

Even today, eleven years later, this is a more or less valid description of the problems. It forms the point of departure for many analyses of the development of the global economy. To a certain extent, Camdessus' synopsis is logically consistent as it is based on a certain economic world view, frequently termed "neoliberalism". The related economic policy certainly acknowledges the enormous importance of regulatory tools. However, its fundamental mission of neoliberalism is to extend the free market as far as possible as it is assumed that the market is the only institution providing genuinely efficient economic action for both producers and consumers alike. Efficient economic activity, in turn, is regarded as the basic condition for making optimum economic use of scarce resources. In the framework of this neoliberal world view, the only way to achieve an optimum growth rate for the economy in the long run is to pursue an economic policy based, as far as possible, on liberalism and a free market. In the neoliberal world view, growth is an extremely desirable economic goal, even in a highly developed country such as the Federal Republic of Germany, irrespective of the growth level we have already achieved.

Let me change perspective for the last time. The view held by Camdessus is not the only possible view of the global economy. A different list of the six key problems here would look roughly as follows:⁹

⁸ Cf. "Finance and Development", in: *IMF-Survey*, vol. 22 no. 10, 22 May 1993.

⁹ Cf. also Diefenbacher, Hans (2001): *Gerechtigkeit und Nachhaltigkeit – zum Verhältnis von Ethik und Ökonomie*. Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchgesellschaft, chapter 11.

- All over the world, economic policy has not been guided by the principle of sustainable development, according to which we should meet our needs in a way that does not deprive future generations of their opportunity to meet their needs.¹⁰
- Programmes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in particular, have failed to be properly initiated since this has been prevented by the vested interests of national economies – primarily the United States of America.
- Current world economy and world trade structures result in a persistent redistribution of income, causing a growing trend to a widening of the gap between rich and poor. Within three decades, the income gap between the poorest 20 % and the richest 20 % of humanity has widened from 30:1 to 74:1. 1.300 million people have less than one US dollar per day, another 1.500 million people have less than 2 US dollars available per day.¹¹
- International finance flows have increasingly decoupled from the production sector and taken on a life of their own, with international institutions virtually unable to control them by means of the rights they are currently endowed with. The players on the financial markets have increasingly escaped the power of national states to regulate and control them.
- Finally, national and continental self-interest, e.g. that of the European Union, has resulted in mutual isolation and the establishment of protectionist structures used by the rich countries to protect their producers. These “unfair structures”¹² represent a blatant contradiction of the lip service paid to the promotion of a free world economy. They jeopardise and partly reverse the positive achievements of economic globalisation.
- The international debate about changes in world economic structures continues to ignore a number of crucial, sensitive issues, including above all the ridiculously high costs of armaments and the necessary conversion of the armaments industry.

This view of problems is also inherently consistent. However, the resulting policy recommendations are based on a completely different fundamental conviction: that the market principle can only lead to good results if it is based on a regulatory framework based on the principle of sustainable development, i.e. an economy that comprises ecological and social sustainability as dimensions enjoying equal rights. At the level of world economic policy, such a framework cannot be established by means of deregulation but only by means of selective planning of carefully co

10 Cf. *World Commission on Environment and Development (ed.) (1987): Our Common Future.*

Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 43 f.

11 *World Bank (ed.) (2003): World Development Report. Washington: World Bank.*

12 Cf. *Stiglitz, Joseph (2004): Die Schatten der Globalisierung. Munich, Goldmann, 224 ff., who outlines the example of the protection of the American aluminium market from competition by Russian producers.*

ordinated instruments. This alternative strategy of globalisation, a strategy of politically shaping the social and economic conditions of the global economy, can be called “enlightened interventionism”.¹³

In virtually all debates about specific individual problems of the world economy the two economic “world views” mentioned above result in different recommendations concerning regulatory reforms of the world trade and finance system. The protagonists of these views are rarely engaged in constructive dialogue as a discussion of individual problems is impossible; the discussion always also affects the key questions of the function and the tasks of the economy in a globalised society.

According to the neoliberal world view, stronger global growth can only be achieved by means of consistent deregulation, stronger efforts to achieve efficiency and a further expansion of markets. This results in a release of resources – and above all redundancies! – which may then, according to this theory, be used to tap the potential for growth. This stronger growth will then lead to an increase in public welfare, i.e. will not only benefit the rich.

This world view is predominantly held by the winners of globalisation. Those affected by its negative repercussions outlined in the examples I gave at the outset of my presentation, those that perceive themselves as people dependent on economic powers beyond their control in shaping their own lives, have lost confidence in the promise of positive effects for everybody. As already mentioned, the gap between poor and rich has steadily widened for 30 years. And for at least as long, we have known that the “growth engine of industrialised nations in its current form may not continue to run forever, nor is it suited for all of humanity”,¹⁴ since resources on our planet are finite.

It is therefore entirely justified if people who primarily suffer from the effects of globalisation in its current form ask, in view of economic injustice and ecological destruction, what industrialised countries will be able to contribute over the next few years in order to bring about a different kind of globalisation. Globalisation could set other key goals: the creation of worldwide basic health care systems, or access to educational facilities, the supply of clean drinking water for all of humanity, secure food supplies, housing, and ultimately the integrity of nature. Obviously, the purchasing power in the world markets will not result in an appropriate accomplishment of these goals.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹⁴ Brunnhuber, Stefan/Klimenta, Harald (2003): *op. cit.*, 14.

2. Intermediate result: On the need for a deliberate shaping of globalisation

In order to contribute to the accomplishment of these goals, it will be necessary to deliberately shape globalisation on the model of sustainability in both ecological and social terms.

(I would like to summarise four particularly important reasons already mentio

ned):¹⁵

1. Over the last few decades, the gap between “poor” and “rich” has steadily widened. The unequal distribution of wealth between the developed industrialised countries and the poor countries of the south has intensified significantly. However, this phenomenon is not only observed at an international level but also exists between the poor and rich regions within many countries. A similar flow of resources from the “poor” to the “rich” is frequently even to be observed with in given regions.¹⁶
2. Free global competition frequently only allows the strongest market players to survive. Trade unions, companies or entire regions feel forced to compete with one another. The protective barriers they have built around their activities over many years are being dismantled. Jobs are being lost, the wages and salaries of those still in employment are dropping, sales in the domestic region are declining, and this is leading to a decline in employment in the trading sector and the supplier companies. In this scenario, profits may certainly rise if there is a boom in sales abroad. Many companies have increasingly lost their links with the region in which their head offices are located.
3. Over the last two decades, globalisation has in particular also been a globalisation of financial markets. Only about 5 per cent of worldwide financial transactions serve to settle invoices for goods and services traded internationally. 95 per cent of financial transactions are of a speculative nature. Due to the politically desired globalisation of financial markets, crisis phenomena can rapidly be transferred from one large region of the earth to another one – and such crises, in turn, can rapidly and directly affect jobs and thus earned income.
4. In the 20th century, the security of provision was constantly increased due to an improvement in international transportation. In the event of crop failures or other types of disasters, deficits in individual regions were more and more re

¹⁵ Cf. *inter alia* Zinn, Karl Georg (1998): *Wie Reichtum Armut schafft. Verschwendung, Arbeitslosigkeit und Mangel*, Cologne: PapyRossa; Ormerod, Paul (1994): *The Death of Economics*, London/Boston: Faber and Faber; Forrester Vivianne (1996): *L'Horreur économique*, Paris: Fayard; German title: *Der Terror der Ökonomie*, Vienna: Zsolnay 1997; Kurtzman, Joel (1993): *The Death of Money*, New York: Simon and Schuster.

¹⁶ Information can be found, *inter alia*, at Trägerkreis des Pilotprojektes *Gerechtigkeit, Armut, Reichtum* (eds.) (1994): *Armut in unserer reichen Gesellschaft*, Mannheim: Industrie- und Sozialpfarramt Nordbaden. Cf. also Douthwaite, Richard (1996): *Short Circuit*. Dublin: Lilliput Press.

liably offset by purchases and transports from unaffected regions – given the corresponding purchasing power. Due to the increase in globalisation, however, we have now reached a state in which the easy availability of goods from other regions has destroyed domestic production in many cases. A function originally used to increase security – being able to buy goods externally, if required – has turned into an all-pervading principle. What is worse: this system is increasingly reducing the amount of superfluous assets it used to have, since the transnational groups, that account for a constantly increasing proportion of world trade, eliminate excess capacity wherever possible – above all in acquiring other companies.

Deliberately shaping a different kind of globalisation thus has to consist of a dual strategy.¹⁷ On the one hand, an attempt needs to be made to shape the overall conditions of the world economy, so that ecologically and socially sustainable behaviour will be worth while for the market players. The second task is to shape economic action in a given place, in a given region such that the inhabitants do not live at the expense of other regions nor have to risk falling victim to crises imported into their regions from other regions by means of economic exchange processes. I would like to comment on these two issues in the third and fourth parts of my presentation.

3. Overall conditions of a socially and ecologically sustainable world economy

Ecologically and socially sustainable parameters are the key elements in shaping a different kind of globalisation. However, there is no simple, overall and easy solution. Rather, the difficult task is having to tackle and deal with many fundamental questions at the same time. In the following, I will present nine issues. The first three issues will focus on questions related to global “justice”, the following three issues will focus on the requirements of “ecological sustainability”, while the last three issues are aimed at contributing to establishing conditions allowing a “development” that integrates the first two principles.

All of these issues show that it is impossible to simply make slight corrections to the above-mentioned “neoliberal world view” of the protagonists of free trade by means of additional measures. The conflict between a neoliberal world view and a world view based on long-term ecological and social sustainability is of a more fundamental nature.¹⁸

17 Cf. Douthwaite, Richard/Diefenbacher, Hanss (1998): Jenseits der Globalisierung – Handbuch für eine lokale Ökonomie. Mainz: Grünewald-Verlag, chapter 2. 18 The following compilation of the ten issues is an abbreviated and revised version of Diefenbacher, Hans (2001), op.cit., 224 ff.

3.1 Implementation of human rights in economic life

A large number of “comparative financial advantages” that cause trade flows in the world continue to be the result of a violation of human rights. Certain goods are only offered cheaply, if at all, because they are produced under conditions that violate the international conventions and declarations on human rights. The United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 does not only mention the prohibition of slavery (article 4), but also the right to work, to just and favourable working conditions and the right to protection against unemployment (article 23.1); it also mentions the right to equal pay for equal work (article 23.2) and the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of both the individual and their families, including sufficient food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services (article 25).¹⁹

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and above all the

Inter

national Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 19 December 1966, outline these basic rights in greater detail.²⁰ The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination of 7 March 1966 and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women of 18 December 1979 are of direct relevance for the economy.²¹

These principles may be easy to formulate, but it is equally easy to prove that

they

are not being observed, or at least only being observed to extremely varying extents, in most countries in the world.²² It would certainly be conceivable to impose penalty duties on exports of goods produced at wage rates below the minimum income required in accordance with article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Should the exporting countries not be willing to understand the need for change, other countries could restrict or prohibit the import of such products. Consumer initiatives should contribute to the creation of a political climate for such considerations by making information on production conditions for certain import goods publicly available.²³

19 Cf. *United Nations (ed.) (1951): Allgemeine Erklärung der Menschenrechte vom 10. Dezember 1948. Zurich: Europa-Verlag.*

20 Cf. *Alefsen, Heike (ed.) (1998): Menschenrechte im Umbruch. Neuwied: Luchterhand.*

21 *Baum, Gerhart (ed.) (1998): Menschenrechtsschutz in der Praxis der Vereinten Nationen. Baden-Baden: Nomos.*

22 *In this context, it may suffice to refer to the as yet unsolved problem of child labour: cf. Raman, Vasantki (1998): Globalisation and child labour. New Delhi: Centre for Women’s Development Studies.*

23 Cf. *inter alia* the “Clean Clothes Campaign”, which has meanwhile set up an international network and

operates as a self-declared NGO control body, just as other Fair Trade campaigns; for further information, go to www.evb.ch/ccc.htm or www.cleanclothes.org.

3.2 Reduction of inequality

While the ratio between the wages of a skilled worker and the salary of a top manager was 1:20 to 1:40 in the 1960s and '70s, it now stands at 1:100 to 1:400. In this context, it is easily forgotten that women have to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of economic and social adjustment policies imposed on lower income groups, since even before that, women were already in a considerably worse economic situation on average.²⁴ In the United States, more than two-thirds of the workers in low-wage categories are women.²⁵ In all industrialised countries, women account for a particularly high proportion of old people living in poverty. Women also usually represent the majority of single parents living in poverty.

Due to the current degree of inequality, a significant reduction in intra- and international inequalities of income and wealth – referring e.g. to a pragmatic implementation of Rawls' concept of inequality²⁶ – is perceived to be required for ethical reasons. As mentioned at the outset, the hopes of combatting poverty by means of growth have not materialised to the extent anticipated by the protagonists of the growth theory. The tools for a policy pursuing this objective are well-known and do not have to be presented in detail here; they range from structural changes in duty and tax policies to the reintroduction of capital tax to funds for regional structures and development in order to promote less-developed sectors and countries.²⁷ I would like to use this opportunity to repeat once again that it is particularly in the field of international trade that every consumer has an opportunity of switching to Fair Trade products.

3.3 Reinforcement of democratisation and participation in economic processes

Economic development should be the result of a process in which the people affected by economic decisions are entitled as far as possible to participate in the decision-making process – at the level of municipalities or regions but also in companies and businesses. In particular in the light of increasing international interdependency, however, there is the risk that western concepts of efficiency, which have been successfully operated in the markets, will also be implemented in societies whose cultural traditions do not grant a similarly important status to this

24 Afshar, Haleh (ed.) (1996): *Women and adjustment policies in the Third World*. Basingstoke: Macmillan. 25 Abowd, John/Kramarz, Francis/Margolis, David (1999): *Minimum wages and employment in France and the United States*. Cambridge, Mass.: NBER [Working Paper No. 6996]. 26 Cf. chapter 5.2.5.

27 Cf. Hensche, Detlev/Schumann, Harald et al. (1998): "Globalisierung gestalten, Weltwirtschaft regulieren"; in: Kreissl-Dörfler, Wolfgang (ed.): *Schicksal Globalisierung? Brussels: The Green Group in the European Parliament*.

type of economy. Without far-reaching participation, the risk is that this may not just result in cultural uniformity but above all in an increasingly far-reaching domination of more and more spheres of life by economic considerations, often called “commodification”.

3.4 Alternative energy and resources policies

What was already known 30 years ago continues to apply today: “We are consuming too much of the world too quickly and we are producing too much waste.”²⁸ The nations with a high level of consumption in particular make it increasingly difficult for the growing world population to live a decent life on this earth.

The conventional liberal discussion about globalisation does not focus on the need to limit rising flows of material and commodities. Traditional theories do not provide economically active players with any “alarms that could guide a restriction and control of economic growth processes in accordance with human, ecological and social aspects in good time”²⁹. On the contrary: in many official statements, the idea of sustainability is perverted in that further globalisation is expected to produce “sustainable growth”.

The environmental space, e.g. for fossil fuels, is limited by two factors: the finite nature of supplies on the one hand, and the negative external effects resulting from the use of these fuels on the other, i.e. above all environmental pollution and in particular the greenhouse effect. In order to curb the risks of climate change, the use of fossil fuels must be drastically reduced. In addition, the reduction in energy consumption has to go hand in hand with the attempt to bring about a more even distribution of energy utilisation among the world’s population. For the industrialised countries, this distribution principle implies a particularly high proportional reduction in energy consumption.

However, what does the achievement of this reduction goal imply for world trade in fossil fuels or other raw materials for which similar considerations could be put forward? The reduction in consumption levels must be reflected in a reduction in trade volumes. This will only be possible in the context of international economic and environmental agreements. Basically, the right course has been charted with the Kyoto Protocol and the trade in CO₂ emission certificates. However, the industrialised countries and the rapidly developing Asian countries are by no means progressing fast enough on this route.

²⁸ *Milieu defensie Amsterdam (ed.) (1994): Nachhaltige Entwicklung in den Niederlanden.*

²⁹ *Lejpert, Christian (1986): „Ist ‘humaner Wohlstand’ möglich?“ in: Universitas, vol. 41, no. 11, 1109–1120; here 1111.*

3.5 Food and sustainable agriculture

The current production of agricultural products is not based on the principle of sustainability, either. In the countries of the south, in particular, the last few decades have seen a steady increase in the pressure on agricultural areas. The overexploitation of the soil is mainly attributable to four reasons: the introduction of industrial agrotechnology, production for export markets, overpopulation in some regions and unequal access to natural resources.³⁰

In order to break the fatal cycle of a deterioration of soils suitable for agricultural cultivation, food scarcity and overexploitation of these soils, a whole package of measures must be pursued at the same time: they include changes in agricultural production methods and changes in nutritional habits. Studies have shown that it may be possible to meet the minimum requirements of healthy nutrition by means of an ecologically oriented agriculture producing food in a way appropriate to a given location.³¹ The high volume of feed exports from the south to the north continues to be problematic. In the framework of site-specific farming, it would not be possible to produce sufficient meat for the entire world population to consume as much meat as currently consumed by people in the industrialised countries of the West.³²

A step in the direction of a corresponding change in the world trade system for agricultural products could be a ban on the export of products at prices below cost price. Furthermore, the international community of nations would have to consider how to prevent the export of agricultural products from regions in which the production of staple food does not suffice to provide for the entire population.

3.6 Minimum ecological and social standards

New or newly negotiated economic accords would have to define and establish regional and international minimum ecological standards to contribute to the creation of overall conditions that would ultimately facilitate an ecological product policy in industry. Such standards should form the basis on which to build a gra

30 Cf. *Milieu defensie* (1994), 68 ff.; for the following section, cf. also Diefenbacher, Hans (2000): „Welt-ernährung, die Entwicklung der Agrartechnik und internationale Agrarpolitik – ein gordischer Knoten?“, in: Ratsch, Ulrich/Mutz, Reinhard/Schoch, Bruno (eds.): *Friedensgutachten 2000*. Münster: Lit-Verlag, 220–229.

31 Cf. *Milieu defensie* (ed.) (1994), 73 ff.

32 *Ibid.*, 75; cf. also Pretty, Jules (1995): *Regenerating Agriculture*. London: Earthscan and Diefenbacher, Hans (2000).

dual harmonisation of environmental standards “from the bottom up”.³³ As before, provisions of this type would have to be complemented by improved product labelling obligations.

In the last few years, a different perspective has given new stimuli to the debate that had become bogged down – the Global Compact and the related Global Reporting Initiative with which companies can voluntarily commit themselves to a system of social and ecological minimum standards and a related reporting system. It is desirable for as many companies as possible to join this or similar initiatives.

3.7 Reducing the international debt burden

As before, the international debt crisis is far from “over” in 2004.³⁴ Debt service obligations are an extreme burden for a large number of countries in the South, above all those with low gross national products. They cause a crucial restriction of the scope for action for economic development, a disproportionate burden on the poorest population strata due to one-sided structural adjustment programmes, and an ongoing orientation of the production structures in many countries to the generation of foreign exchange income rather than the needs of people.³⁵ Over the next few years, the community of creditor countries must commit itself to engage in further debt reduction measures.

3.8 International control of transnational companies

The trend towards a concentration of market shares on an increasingly smaller number of large corporations operating transnationally still prevails.³⁶ At the international level, there is still no institution endowed with the rights and the authority of a well-functioning anti-trust office. However, such an institution is urgently required.

³³ Cf. *EKD Advisory Commission on Development and Environment (ed.) (2000): Food Security and Sustainable Development. Hanover, chapter 10 on the problems of WTO conflict settlement mechanisms; however, similar demands had already been raised by Windfuhr, Michael (1993): „Handel, Umwelt, Entwicklung“, in: Engels, Benno (ed.): Perspektiven einer neuen internationalen Handels politik, Hamburg: Junius, 88.*

³⁴ Cf. *the annual Schuldenreports by Weltwirtschaft, Ökologie und Entwicklung (WEED) e.V.; the 1996 edition contains a „Plädoyer für deutsche Entschuldungsinitiativen“; Eberlei, Walter/Ummüßig, Barbara/Wahl, Peter (1996): Schuldenreport '96. Bonn: WEED.*

³⁵ Cf. *inter alia Mistry, Percy (1994): Multilateral Debt. Bruxelles: FONDAD; Uctum, Merih/Wickens, Michael (1996): Debt and deficit ceilings, and sustainability of fiscal policies: an intertemporal analysis. London: Centre for Economic Policy Research.*

³⁶ Cf. *World Bank (ed.) (2000).*

By means of the “Global Compact” mentioned earlier, a certain amount of progress has been achieved in recent years to involve transnational companies in a dialogue concerning the social and ecological impact of their activities. However, it is necessary to intensively continue this process and generate an international discussion of the development of economic policy tools that might adequately relate productivity growth to increases in earned income.

3.9 Reform of international institutions

Five decades of global policies by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the OECD and the Bank for International Settlements have left deep marks everywhere in the world. The experience gained in the past decade, in particular, has shown that above a certain threshold of inequality in income and wealth, any policy aimed at generating quantitative growth will result in a stabilisation of wealth *and* poverty.³⁷

A different kind of globalisation would have to improve the opportunities for poor countries to have their say in international finance institutions, as a basis for decision-making processes in these institutions. This would imply that the rich industrialised countries would have to surrender some power and influence. Perhaps this is the most difficult point to implement on my list of nine ways to change the overall framework for a different kind of globalisation. Nevertheless I am convinced that we must not stop trying and that we must seek dialogue with German politicians representing Germany in these institutions.

4. Regional economy

Let me turn to the fourth part of my presentation, i.e. the second part of the “dual strategy” for a different kind of globalisation – the question as to how we could change our own local and regional economy to reduce the enormous pressure imposed on the world market, the environment and future generations by the immense energy and resource requirements of industrialised countries. In my view, there is no alternative but to contrast certain parts of the all-pervading global economic system with locally sustainable alternatives – in any case, it makes sense to secure the particularly high-risk sectors of the global economic system by means of local

³⁷ Cf. also Williams, Marc (1994): *International Economic Organizations and the Third World*. New York/ London et al.: Harvester Wheatsheaf, here chapter 8.; Non-Aligned Movement Panel of Economists (ed.) (1998): „Elements for an Agenda of the South“, in: *South Letter*, no. 32, April 1998, 24–27.

alternatives. Such a promotion of regional and local economic structures “beyond globalisation” implies focussing on completely different questions, i.e.:³⁸

- What ought to be done in a given region to better meet the needs of people living there?
- Which of the inhabitants of that region could contribute to it?
- How can the resources required for this action be provided?

To avoid misunderstandings: the purpose is not to try to isolate individual regions, and not to withdraw from national or international policy-making. Even if regions have developed regional economic structures, their borders should be open – but competition should not be oriented towards the principle of the survival of the fittest but rather towards the structure of a network based on solidarity. By no means would international trade grind to a halt.

To a certain extent, the scope for action at the local and regional level is affected by the national and international framework. Even though this may seem to be paradoxical at first glance, this also applies the other way round: if local structures were to change significantly in quantitative terms, above all: if consumers were to reorientate their daily purchasing decisions, this would also change the tasks for national and international regulatory policies.

In this context, five principles may be mentioned that may be considered as guiding principles for the shaping of the economy at the local level, i.e. the place where we live:

1. In our regions, too, any economic activity should have to be shaped in a way allowing it to be implemented without causing ecological destruction affecting future generations. The reduction in biodiversity caused by a certain type of agriculture is an example of economic activity in our country which clearly violates this principle.
2. The achievement of economic growth must not be a lasting prerequisite for wealth or full employment, at least not at the high material level achieved by our economy.
3. Every region should be aware of the order of magnitude of the “ecological backpack” imposed on other regions in the world by the domestic consumption pattern and lifestyle. We do not have a second globe available – every region should therefore do everything in its power to reduce the size of this burden.
4. Above all, the energy consumed in a region should be produced to the greatest possible extent by means of renewable sources of energy in this region.

38 See here Douthwaite, Richard/Diefenbacher, Hans (1998), op.cit., chap. 2.

5. Once again, I would like to end on a principle particularly difficult to implement: It will be necessary for a region to have a large number of alternative settlement systems available for people to settle their different needs. International currencies will have to be complemented by: local exchange trading systems (LETS), time deposit accounts, credit cooperatives restricting their activities to a specific region, and other elements.

An economy based on the criteria of local sustainable development will not be controlled by large companies, will be far less driven by international competitiveness but will not generate fast growth, either. It will consist of a network of regions and municipalities that are able to meet many of their requirements from their own resources. The average level of material consumption will perhaps drop slightly from the current level.

A fundamental change in the direction of this kind of economic approach cannot be brought about overnight. However, it is certainly possible to start (re-)establishing local structures in many different areas. There are many projects, including projects in the church sphere or in the framework of processes of the local Agenda 21, that have achieved lasting progress on this road. These projects cannot be considered a blueprint but they are certainly a pattern that may be transferred to other communities.

In terms of the creation of new jobs, the quantitative net effect of individual projects may currently be small. However, the total effect of these projects – in particular if social employment initiatives are taken into account – is considerable. It is therefore important not to see these alternatives as unwanted stopgap solutions for the period allegedly required for the “free market economy” to return to its growth path and thus sort out all its employment problems. There is no prospect of success for this traditional neoliberal strategy. However, taking regional sustainability as a model for orientation might open up new scope for action to help the economy gain a human dimension in line with the requirements of nature.

5. Regionalisation and globalisation: reversing the onus of proof

Let me turn to the end of my presentation. I have tried to show that many different measures are required to promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation in a globalised economy. The attempt to influence the shaping of international policies to change the regulatory framework of the world economy must go hand in hand with the attempt to take small practical steps to change the local and regional economy in a “bottom up” process. These changes will have to be very far-reaching compared with current structures, but it is certainly possible to make headway on

this pathway to change. I hope that my propositions have helped to point out that there is no point in regarding globalisation as a general category and declaring it to be the enemy overall. However, I believe that over the next few years we can subscribe to a demand raised ten years ago by Herman Daly, former member of staff at the World Bank, who called for a change in perspective, virtually the reversal of the onus of proof, instead of further deregulation of the international movement of goods and services.³⁹

“The promotion of domestic products should be considered to be the rule. Where appropriate, balanced foreign trade might be used; however, it should not control domestic affairs to such an extent that ecological and social disasters are looming in the country. ... As a consequence, every measure for the further integration of national economies should be considered as a bad proposal and convincing arguments should be required for every single exception to this rule.”

In my view, international organisations have basically embarked on the right course. The guidelines presented at world conferences such as UNCED – sustainable development – must be translated to scheduled action plans and monitored at review conferences. Non-governmental organisations – in particular the churches – must not slacken in their efforts to get involved in this process and to act as advocates of nature and of people unable to contribute to this process on their own. Above all, however, the churches can encourage people locally, in their congregations and by means of their own example, to take their everyday decisions as producers, consumers and investors in such a way that our economy will become sustainable.

Some of the points I have presented may initially sound utopian. However, I would reply that Utopias point to potential developments in society⁴⁰ – i.e. developments that are feasible. Under this perspective, a different kind of globalisation is not mere fiction in our convictions, not an artificial construction, but the description of a potential future, a potential reality. An “enlightened” utopia is not a static model but requires constant modification. In discussing the elements of a different kind of globalisation – both the opportunities offered and the resistance faced by it – we are forced to review not just our knowledge but also our hopes and wishes, ideologies and goals. With this in mind, I wish you a constructive continuation of the work you have started in your regional church on issues of globalisation.

39 Cf. Informationsbrief Weltwirtschaft und Entwicklung of 14 April 1994, 6 f.
40 Cf. Picht, Georg (1967): Prognose – Utopie – Planung. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

5. Appendix

5.1 Letter from the world

associations Dear friends, sisters and

brothers in Christ,

we want to share with you the important outcomes of the consultation on “Economy in the Service of Life” held in June 2002 in Soesterberg (The Netherlands).

This consultation was jointly held by the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the WARC European Area Committee. It was hosted by the National Council of Churches in The Netherlands.

The Soesterberg consultation was part of a series of consultations on the churches’ response to economic globalisation held in 1999 in Bangkok and in 2001 in Budapest and Fiji. Results of the consultation are formulated in the following three documents:

- A letter to the Churches in Western Europe
- The response of the Soesterberg consultation to the Letter to the Churches in the North from the Bangkok symposium, the message from the Fiji Consultation and a call by the churches of Argentina
- The response of the Soesterberg consultation to the message of the Budapest Consultation of churches in Central and Eastern Europe

You are kindly encouraged to make these available to congregations, ecumenical groups, synods and other decision making bodies in your churches.

The two major objectives of the Western European consultation were:

- to analyse how economic globalisation and the role of money affects societies in Western Europe
- to develop a response from Western European churches to questions raised by churches in Central and Eastern Europe and in the South.

Economic globalisation is most advanced in the sphere of the international financial and monetary system. There has been a dramatic shift in the relationship between the power of financial markets and the power of nation states. An allpervasive adherence to profit-seeking “shareholder value” has enabled financial flows and transactions increasingly to be separated from the real economy. This has allowed capital to become

an end in itself rather than a means to serve the needs of people. Among other developments, this has already produced a whole sequence of

devastating financial crises, and consequently a continual shift of wealth from the poor to the wealthy, both within and between countries, leading to an unprecedented level of global inequality and instability.

A working group on global finances at the Soesterberg meeting called upon churches to urge their governments to give priority to a fundamental reform of the international financial and monetary order in order to bring the financial and monetary sphere closer to the real needs of humanity and to re-anchor money in the real economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) are key institutions in the process of economic globalisation. The group underlined that churches must engage in encounters with these institutions as well as with national governments and institutions of the European Union. Churches should work in the spirit of globalising solidarity and cooperate with alliances in civil society that are active in this field.

We hope the three Soesterberg documents will contribute to strengthening the dialogue and debate on economic globalisation among churches of different regions. In view of the forthcoming assemblies of CEC (Trondheim 2003), LWF (Winnipeg 2003), WARC (Accra 2004) and WCC (Porto Alegre 2006) we would like to ask the member churches of our organisations to prepare themselves for the debate at the assemblies by responding to the challenges of economic globalisation in a committed way through their appropriate mechanisms for discussion and decision making.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Konrad Raiser	Dr. Ishmael Noko	Dr. Setri Nyomi	Dr. Keith Clements
World Council of Churches	Lutheran World Federation	World Alliance of Conference of Reformed Churches	European Churches

5.2 Letter to the Churches in Western Europe – Soesterberg

Letter Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

we write this letter from the ecumenical consultation on the Economy in the Service of Life that took place from June 15–19, 2002 in Soesterberg (The Netherlands), graciously hosted by the Dutch Council of Churches. More than 80 representatives from Western European churches, as well as guests from churches in Central and Eastern Europe, North America, Africa and Asia, from the Vatican and from ecumenical organisations, gathered under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the European Area Committee of WARC.

The process

The Soesterberg consultation was part of an ongoing process of churches evaluating and responding to urgent challenges raised by economic globalisation, as it affects the lives of people and the rest of creation around the world.

The WARC General Council in Debrecen in 1997 called the churches to “a committed process of progressive recognition, education and confession (*processus confessionis*) regarding economic injustice and ecological destruction”. The Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Harare later strongly endorsed this position, stating “that all churches around the world must begin to reflect on the meaning of the Christian confession in this time of increasing injustice and uninterrupted environmental destruction”. The Lutheran World Federation has begun a related process with a working paper, “Engaging Economic Globalisation as a Communion.”

Three joint consultations took place in Bangkok in 1999 and in Budapest and in Fiji in 2001.

In response to this ongoing process, we met in Soesterberg to analyse how economic globalisation and the role of money affects societies in Western Europe, and to develop the response of Western European churches to questions raised previously by churches in Central and Eastern Europe and in the South. Attached to this letter, you receive a report on the conference with more information on our deliberations concerning the global financial system and also copies of the letters to churches in the South and in Central and Eastern Europe. The three letters belong together.

Concerns raised

The consultation provided an opportunity to analyse the global financial system and the impact of the unregulated flow of huge amounts of capital on national economies. International financial transactions have registered an incredibly steep rise so much that nowadays only about 1 % of currency movements are due to commercial activities. The financial crises in Asia, Russia, and most recently Argentina had and continue to have devastating consequences for peoples and their livelihoods, adding to the already unbearable debt burden in many countries. Other aspects of the accelerated process of economic globalisation and the changing context were also discussed. Financial markets and trade in commodities and services are more and more integrated, the free movement of people, however, is further restricted. Growing inequality leads at the same time to increasing numbers of migrants who are refused the same rights as other citizens and find themselves and their families in very difficult circumstances and confronted with new expressions of racism.

We were also reminded that the wars in former Yugoslavia and especially the NATO bombing in the Kosovo war had a negative impact on the relationships between churches in Western and Central and Eastern Europe. We shared deep concerns about the militarisation of global politics, increasing military spending and the strong unilateralism of the government of the United States of America (USA) at the expense of the multi-lateral system of the United Nations. The new focus on security undermines the sense of shared vulnerability of human communities and of solidarity with those who lose out in the process of economic globalisation.

Life in its fullness for all people and the whole creation – Overcoming neo-liberal globalisation

We asked ourselves, how does the promise of the Gospel help us in the task of ethical discernment in the present context:

- The Gospel promises life in all its fullness for all people and the whole creation (John 10,10). This promise was incarnated in Jesus Christ. Nobody is excluded from God's household of life. The Christian community reflects this vision, for the sake of the whole world. Guided by this vision, we strive for an economy in the service of life. Markets and money should enable the exchange of goods in order to satisfy human needs and contribute to the upbuilding of human community.
- Today, however, we see a growing domination of real life by private financial and corporate interests. Economic globalisation is guided by a logic which gives priority to accumulating capital, unbridled competition and the securing of profit in

narrowing markets. Political and military power are used as instruments to secure safe access to resources and to protect investment and trade. This guiding logic is often identified as neo-liberalism. The neo-liberal economic doctrine unleashes the forces of economic globalisation in ways which do not recognise limits. This form of liberalisation has quickly resulted in profound political, social, cultural and even religious repercussions, which affect the lives of people all around the world through growing inequality, impoverishment, injustice and environmental destruction.

- Churches participating in the ecumenical process (for example at the WCC Harare Assembly) have affirmed that the ideology of neo-liberalism is incompatible with the vision of the *oikoumene*, of the unity of the Church and the whole inhabited earth. Extensive and growing injustice, exclusion and destruction are opposed to the sharing and solidarity associated with being the body of Christ. What is at stake is the quality of communion, the future of the common good of society and the credibility of the churches' confession of and witness to God, who stands with and for the poor.
- For the sake of the integrity of their communion and witness, churches are called to confront the neo-liberal doctrine and practice and to follow God. From the consultations so far, there is growing agreement that running the global market according to an unquestioned neo-liberal doctrine becomes idolatrous, leading to exclusion, violence and death. This reality, but also the possibility of transformation and alternatives, unfolded as we shared stories of those suffering consequences of the implementation of neo-liberalism and listened to the letter and the messages from our Southern and Central and Eastern European sisters and brothers.

Questions for consideration

In the ongoing process, we ask congregations and synods of our churches to consider the following questions regarding positions and practices by the churches themselves:

- What is the meaning of the unity of the Churches as the one body of Christ; of baptism, of eucharist and ministry in the context of economic globalisation? How do the Bible readings and liturgies during the church year speak to us in this context?¹
- Why are our churches addressing poverty but hesitate to address wealth?

1 WARC sponsored a consultation on Bible readings and liturgies during the church year in July 2001 in Basel. Kairos Europa prepared a publication with helpful material.

- How do our churches deal with their own money, their pension funds, investments and real estate? Are banks, to which our churches are related, involved in tax evasion, in ethically unacceptable investment and speculation practices and other activities undermining the capacity of the state to strive for the common good?
- Is our observation correct that in many European countries the state has increasingly surrendered to the concept of the free market, reducing its historic role as guardian of the common good and defender of the weak?
- As far as we as churches with our social and health services are involved in competitive markets, do we realise our potential to shape market conditions in the interest of the public good as well as in the interests of our churches? How do we respond to the increasing privatisation of public and social goods and services essential for life such as water, health care, education etc.?
- What kind of consumption and life-style do we practise and promote? How can we as churches and individual church members raise awareness of climate change and work for environmental protection, using, for example, energy more carefully in church buildings, housing, transport etc.?
- How do we engage in the public discourse on economic policies and with institutions promoting and implementing neo-liberal economic practices? How do we build alliances with social movements, which are calling on governments to strive for the common good and for restoration of a just and sustainable political and social framework for economic activities?

Concrete initiatives for common action

We are fully aware and appreciate that churches in our region and also the Conference of European Churches are already taking action. We especially affirm the document of the North-South Working Group of the Church and Society Commission (CEC) “European social market economy – an alternative model for globalisation?” and want to highlight the orientation on the important basic human values, mentioned in Chapter 5 of this document.²

We are thankful for many existing concrete initiatives at national, regional and global level. We encourage our churches to consider how the following examples might further this work:

with regard to the **debt issue**

- for support of the churches in their recognition of the historical and presently accumulating social and ecological debts, which in fact are owed to people and

2 Values of dignity, justice, freedom, peace, sustainability, responsibility, solidarity and subsidiarity.

countries of the South, e.g. with the Mission Covenant Church (Sweden), Jubilee South, Friends of the Earth, and Accion Ecologica (Ecuador);

- for the continuation of efforts for cancellation of bi- and multilateral debts of the poorest developing countries and the establishment of a debt arbitration mechanism to reduce substantially the debt burden of other developing countries; the repudiation of illegitimate and odious debt, i.e. in the strategy of Jubilee 2000 and Jubilee South;

with regard to the **financial system**

- for reforms of the international financial architecture that should ensure an adequate representation of all developing countries as well as civil society in the decision-making process, e.g. encounters with senior representatives of IMF and World Bank, an initiative by the WCC;
- for mechanisms to deter excessive, destabilising currency speculation (such as an effective currency transaction tax, Tobin Tax), e.g. the work of ATTAC³ and ecumenical groups and churches supporting it;
- for studying the possibility to treat and tax money like all other commodities, given the fact that currencies are no longer instruments in the service of the economy, but are themselves traded in the financial markets;
- for national and regional central banks to exercise more control over monetary policy and in relation to the markets; develop a multilateral approach to defining common standards to minimise opportunities for tax avoidance by both transnational corporations (TNCs) and investment funds; e.g. supporting the goals of the ongoing political processes in several countries and at the global level to close off-shore centers, control hedge-funds and micro-control of private banks;
- for a multilateral agreement that allows states to tax TNCs on a global unitary basis, with adequate mechanisms to allocate tax revenues internationally;
- for an international convention to facilitate the recovery and repatriation of funds illegally appropriated from national treasuries of developing countries;
- for an increase in official development aid and alternative funding for investments in public goods (health, education, sanitation, water) and basic social services, e.g. by staying engaged with the UN – Financing for Development – Follow-up Process by the ecumenical team of the WCC and by church related NGOs of the South and North (e.g. Social Watch Report, Montevideo);

³ ATTAC is the Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens. ATTAC was founded in France in 1998, and now has over 80,000 members worldwide. It is an international network of independent national and local groups in 33 countries. It promotes the idea of an international tax on currency speculation (the Tobin Tax) and campaigns to outlaw tax havens, replace pension funds with state pensions, cancel Third World debt, reform or abolish the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and, more generally, recapture the democratic space that has been lost to the financial world.

with regard to **business**

- for legal frameworks guaranteeing corporate social and environmental accountability, e.g. an initiative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;
- for strengthening church support to other ways of conducting business with higher social returns, the idea of ecological and social components of business, e.g. as realised in fair-trade, Oikocredit, the economy of communion of the Focolare movement, etc.
- to join the movement for Socially Responsible Investments, ethical investment and ethical/ecological funds, e.g. as in Dutch Green Funds;
- to promote the introduction of tax credits as an instrument to increase investments in Green Funds and Social-Ethical Funds, e.g. the recent legislation enacted in the Netherlands.
- for increased individual consumer responsibilities regarding goods, financial transactions, services, e.g. as documented in “Shopping for a better world”;

with regard to the **European Union**

- for supporting ecumenical offices monitoring European policies and European political institutions, e.g. through support for the initiatives by the Church and Society Commission of CEC, the Churches’ Commission on Migrants in Europe (CCME), WCC related European Development Agencies (APRODEV), and Eurodiakonia
- for strengthening policies for social cohesion and inclusion in Europe, both in the EU as well as in other European countries and engagement with the debate on globalisation e.g. with the document of the European Commission on “Responses to the Challenges of Globalisation”;
- for more welcoming and supportive policies concerning migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and against trafficking of women;
- for monitoring EU development policies; the EU and its individual member states should clearly express their responsibility for the eradication of poverty worldwide through decisive action;
- for support of the many initiatives by movements and NGOs monitoring and criticising the EU position in international trade negotiations and the International Financial Institutions;
- for fair, just and speedy negotiations on EU integration;
- for more public accountability of the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, especially regarding their role in Central and Eastern Europe;

with regard to **international organisations and the UN system**

- for public accountability in international institutions in general and a stronger supervisory role of governments for the common good;

- for more equitable access and more democratic participation in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), promotion of fair trade, priority to poverty eradication in the South, and protection of rights of individuals and communities, e.g. through the Third World Network (Malaysia) and the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance;
- for a halt on the negotiations on the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), pressing municipalities and governments even more to privatise basic public services (e.g. water, energy, health);
- for the compliance of governments and international institutions, especially IMF, World Bank and WTO with U.N. Human Rights instruments, including economic, social and cultural rights, as e.g. called for by LWF, WCC, Bread for the World, FIAN and EED;
- for refusal to go along with the justification of wars, militarisation of global politics, and increasing military spending in the name of “war against terrorism” instead of using the resources for abolishing the root causes of terrorism by social and economic justice and through better international co-operation in the multilateral UN system;
- for the restriction of the arms trade, as in the Small Arms Campaign;

with regard to **civil society**

- for support by the churches for civil society groups and movements to be listened to and taken seriously by governments so that a real dialogue becomes possible, e.g. joining movements like ATTAC as just done by the Alliance of Reformed Churches in Germany;
- for a multilayer approach by churches engaging with the grassroots in lobbying, and networking at local, national, regional and international levels; e.g. by strengthening co-operation with and between church related development agencies, mission boards, WCC, World Communions and their member churches and partners;
- for the establishment of a truth forum, as suggested by the Argentinian Federation of Evangelical Churches⁴;

These initiatives are concrete steps to reverse the tide and to overcome neo-liberal globalisation. They are examples of engagement and communication between economic, ethical and theological perspectives with often underlying antagonistic values, language and institutional rationalities. They often require high sensitivity to

4 In Memory of an encounter: Final document on the Ecumenical Round Table on the situation in Argentina the participants suggest: “1.1.1.3 Promote the creation of permanent truth forum, with significant social, ecumenical and inter-religious participation, along with participation by human rights and justice organisations, from and with the churches of the North, with the goal of having an impact on the understanding that societies and governments have of the external debt issue and on the conditions that are imposed on our societies for their development.”

make constructive encounters possible. Churches may have a prominent role to play in developing communication between often alienated world views.

We encourage ourselves and each other

Concluding our letter to the leadership and members of our own churches, we want to reiterate what we also write to our sisters and brothers in the South and in Central and Eastern Europe.

Participating in the ecumenical process, we want to encourage ourselves and each other:

- to join together in ecumenical processes to more seriously commit ourselves, because of our religious convictions, to work more vigorously for justice in the economy and on the earth;
- to struggle together for all to enjoy life in all its fullness;
- to analyse the destructiveness of the current economic system and to speak out against the injustices of economic globalisation;
- to search for alternatives by providing financial and spiritual support, and to support already existing and newly emerging economic and social alternatives like Oikocredit, the economy of communion of the Focolare movement, and fair trade;
- to join hands with civil and social movements to further our common goals;
- to facilitate networking to promote solidarity between the churches in the South and the churches in Central and Eastern Europe;
- to call for fair, just and speedy negotiations on the EU integration and recognition of the justified claims of those who are not included in this process;
- to work for social inclusion of all who are affected by negative impacts of economic and social policies;
- to adopt self-restraint and simplicity in lifestyle, in resistance to the dominating cultural patterns of consumerism;
- to call for the establishment of a truth forum, as suggested by the Argentinian Federation of Evangelical Churches⁵, and subsequently
- to seek redress for injustices, such as illegitimate debts and unfair trade conditions.

In order jointly to walk towards an economy in the service of life we need to learn from each other and to remind each other of the one hope that unites us – that is Christ and his life-giving gospel.

5 Cf. footnote 4.

5.3 Members of working group Soesterberg Letter

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Höcker, Rüdiger Pastor in Minden	Standing Committee on World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility Committee on social issues
Jähnichen, Dr. Traugott Professor at the Ruhr- University Bochum	Standing Committee on World Mission, Ecumenism and Global sponsibility
Koblener, Friedrich-Wilhelm Prokurist i.R.	Standing Committee on World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility Standing Committee on
Koch, Heike Pastor in Bielefeld	World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility Standing Committee on
Kronshage, Christa Member of Church Board Chairperson	World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility
Möller, Dr. Ulrich Member of Church Board Head of the Department for World Mission and Ecumenism	Standing Committee on World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility
Ohligschläger, Peter Head of the Institute for Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility	Standing Committee on World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility
Pöppel, Dr. Irmgard Doctor	Standing Committee on World Mission, Ecumenism and Global Responsibility
Reihs, Sigrid Institute for Church and Society of the Evangelical Church of Westfalia	Committee on social issues
Welz, Reiner Department for Church and Society of the Church district Herford	Committee on social issues
Wichert, Udo Manager Member of Church Board	social issues Committee on social issues

5.4 Press release

Economy in the service of life Westphalian Church takes a stand on globalisation

Bielefeld. An economic concept exclusively based on the “free interplay of market forces” conflicts with the Christian conception of human beings: by itself, the market does not create justice nor environmental protection. Based on this conviction, the Regional Synod of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia adopted a differentiated response concerning the analysis and shaping of economic globalisation under the heading “Economy in the service of life” last Friday (19 November).

In doing so, the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (EKvW) is taking a stand in the current discussion among churches in Europe and worldwide in the run-up to the 2006 General Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

According to the response, the worldwide network, resulting from the liberalisation of global trade and global financial markets, is based on imbalances. It is characterised by economic powers beyond democratic control. This is at the expense of the poor and the poorest of the poor in the countries of the South but also of employees in western countries. As a result, the gap between the winners and losers of globalisation is widening.

EKvW and its partner churches in worldwide ecumenism share the view that this represents a common challenge to Christians all over the world.

EKvW contrasts an unbridled globalised economy with the principle of sustainability. This means: ensuring that people all over the world live in dignity without destroying the Earth’s natural resources. According to the response, the liberalised global economy does not take account of the environmental concerns as a matter of principle. Irreversible damage is already being observed, e.g. with the indications of global climate change. This will affect future generations.

EKvW contradicts the assertion that the globalisation of markets does not allow for any alternatives. Economic strategies cannot claim absoluteness. The market principle must not determine all spheres of social and political life in society, but only order economic activity.

Workers must not be regarded as a mere cost factor. Economic success and social balance are goals of equal rank and each has to be seen as a precondition for the other. A market economy can only serve life if it is social. In Germany, this is an achievement which must not be put at risk.

The Evangelical Church of Westphalia thus advocates the following goals:

- The indivisibility of human rights must be a binding feature in shaping globalisation. This includes: equal opportunities for men and women, the right to work and humane working conditions as well as health care and education, fundamental political participation rights and the responsibility for the life support systems for future generations.
- Social and ecological criteria must be integrated in all international economic agreements. They must e.g. be integrated in the GATS negotiations on the liberalisation of trade and services in services of general interest.
- Millions of people infected with Aids need access to affordable life-saving drugs. To this end, patent rights to medical drugs must be restricted for the affected countries.
- Patents on living organisms must be ruled out as they would increase the risk of letting agriculture become dependent on a handful of multinational corporations.
- Staple foodstuffs must be excluded from the negotiations of the World Trade Agreement so as to ensure that the peasant agriculture in poor countries can protect itself from imports.
- A tax on foreign currency trading (Tobin tax) must be introduced.

Synod encourages the church districts and congregations to take account of social and ecological criteria besides economic criteria in their investments (sustainable investment).

In 2000, the UN committed itself to halving world poverty by 2015. According to Synod's conviction, this goal would be unattainable without radical change. EKvW aims to work towards the achievement of these goals within church and society.

The response states that the church and its social service agencies are also affected by economic restraints which they cannot determine themselves. "Wherever areas of work are limited and entitlements under collective agreements are reduced, wherever redundancies are unavoidable, this contradicts our sense of justice." The regional church therefore commits itself to continuing to promote projects that strengthen both the Christian profile and the competitiveness of social service agencies. It intends to continue to engage in advocacy for the weakest members of our society and to lobby in the political and social arena on their behalf.

For a “different kind” of globalisation

Economist calls for less consumption and more justice – Global and local changes in the economy

Dr. Hans Diefenbacher Bielefeld

Unless its political framework is changed, economic globalisation will have increasingly disastrous consequences for more and more people and the environment all over the world. This warning was issued by economist Dr. Hans Diefenbacher (Heidelberg) at the Synod of the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (EKvW), who also suggested various possible ways of changing.

The 15th Regional Synod in Westphalia, which is held in Bielefeld-Bethel and will last until Friday, focuses on globalisation on 17 November, which in Germany is traditionally a day of prayer and repentance. Diefenbacher advocated a dual strategy: the attempt to influence international politics must be combined with the “attempt to take small practical steps to change the local and regional economy in a ‘bottom up’ process”. The guest speaker painted the picture of a sustainable economy, not one controlled by large corporations. However, it would not generate rapid growth. It would enable the regions and municipalities to meet many requirements on the basis of their own resources, with the level of consumption “perhaps slightly lower” than the current level.

The economist from the Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (Heidelberg) outlined the elements used to shape a “different”, i.e. socially and ecologically sustainable, globalisation. According to him, the current system of economic inter-relationships leads to a constant violation of human rights. Diefenbacher: “It would certainly be conceivable to impose penalty duties on the imports of goods produced at below a living wage.” The extreme inequality in wages must be offset by e.g. structural changes in duty and tax policies and the reintroduction of capital gains tax. While the ratio between the wages of a skilled worker and the salary of a top manager was 1:20 in the 1970s, it now stands at 1:400. Another issue: international economic and environmental agreements to stop ecological destruction. After all, “as before, we have to state: we are consuming too much of the world too quickly and we are producing too much waste”. The economist also warned against the “fatal cycle” of a deterioration of soils suitable for agricultural cultivation, food scarcity and overexploitation of these soils. According to him, it is certainly possible to meet the minimum requirements of healthy nutrition by means of organic agriculture producing food in a way appropriate to a given location. Diefenbacher suggested a ban on the export of products at below cost price.

Synod, the EKvW’s “parliament”, will adopt several decisions on the issue of globalisation on Friday 19 November.