



DISTINGUISHED SENIOR CITIZENS OF THE WORLD CONGRESS

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Old age is not simply a numerical increase. It is a social responsibility that calls for the focusing of public concern.”

It is with this view, that older people are “assets not liabilities,” that the Turyak Seniors Council held the Distinguished Senior Citizens of the World Congress. Held December 4 and 5, 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey, this event brought together leading senior citizens to offer solutions for diverse challenges (economic, ecological, etc.) confronting the world.

WANGO was delighted to partner with Turyak on this event, along with the International Federation on Ageing (IFA). IFA is the world’s leading international organization in matters of age and ageing and its view that older people are “resources not burdens to society” made it a natural partner with Turyak for this congress. As the Chairman and initiator of Turyak, Mr. Mete Bora, put it “the accumulated knowledge and experience of the elderly are too valuable to keep idle.”

During the two days of the congress, leading elders from throughout the world gathered to share views on the conference theme of “Wholesome Solutions to the World Crisis.” Three major areas were the focus of the congress: the global economic and employment crisis, the ecosystem crisis and collaborative global politics, and the alliance of civilizations—surviving with wisdom on our Earth.



Mr. Mete Bora, Chairman of Turyak



WANGO Assistant Secretary General, Dr. Frederick Swarts, presenting at the Opening Plenary Session.



Mr. Mete Bora (right), Chairman of Turyak, and Prof. Dr. Nukhet Hotar (left), Vice President of the AK Party, present an award to prominent businessman Mr. Beyti Guler (center).

DECLARATION
TURYAK INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
“WHOLESOME SOLUTIONS TO THE WORLD CRISIS”
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“We, as the senior citizens of the World, see it necessary for the world system to shift to more efficient and needs-based production policies that are physically, ecologically, socially and emotionally sustainable”ⁱ. We must understand that the humanity and our world have lost their harmony with the cosmos. This is where the crisis starts. We hope to succeed in bringing wisdom and culture to the forefront; we will see that they are both directed towards the same goal based on generally accepted values and norms which will provide a strong framework for full coverage of the entire humanity. Thanks to such a global value system which truly understands that it is humankind’s common destiny; alliances of civilizations will increase, whereas competition among the strongest and the psychology of establishing hegemony over the others will decrease.

Interconnection and interdependency between the environment and people forms the very foundation of the universal system. The perception of nature as an unlimited resource is a wrong one. The ecosystem crisis that we are facing today mostly stems from the failure of natural systems to operate in a healthy manner due to the harmful effects of waste coming out of resource utilization processes as well as production and consumption of products. There are three reasons leading to this problem:

- * consumption philosophy and patterns,
- * resource, space planning and site selection,
- * production technologies.

Even if the world has the capacity to cope with the increase in populations, it simply cannot do so due to this wrongful attitude of excessive consumption. A lifestyle driven by the technological developments which does not take into account the future is not a sustainable one. It is very important to ensure a change in mentality and concordantly to get organised for the cause of the environment. Once people grasp the wholeness of the ecosystem, then everyone should do their share of the work for balanced utilization.

It is observed that the environmental organisations around the world remain rather weak vis-à-vis existing need, which stems from the following reasons: Civilizations are based on four fundamental values;

- * principle of justice emerging from love (rule of law, potential justice),
- * principle of fairness (kinetic justice),
- * principle of honesty (loyalty and fidelity),
- * principle of sincerity.

We should come to a mutual agreement on finding a shared notion of civilization which takes into account all of these principles. Civilization is like a river. It is not static, it continues to flow from the past to the future, and that's the reason why we cannot really talk about a Western or an Eastern civilization as well as civilizations based on certain religions. It is important for cultures to understand and respect one another's differences without causing unnecessary polarization. All cultures should be preserved to ensure the sustainability of diversity.

The very essence of wisdom/reason is to acknowledge the true nature of things. Such an acknowledgement perceives the earth as a divine asset which is to be respected and not to be harmed. To be able to revive our capability to protect and restore the balance that we have lost, there is a great need for an effective and sincere effort starting at the individual level, further extending and reaching out to countries and the United Nations.

Since such an effort is not yet in place, it has become more frequent for the world crisis to centre around the economy. Taking into account the recent monetary crises, we should not ignore the imperative need to structurally reform the economic system. Exiting such crises can only be possible by changing our perspective. The world crisis can be overcome through such a production concept which is respectful of the world's resources and is in harmony with the ecosystem. While doing so, we need to pick up and focus on specific sectors within each country which will yield productive employment and quality products, innovation and innovative discoveries, patents, world-class companies and brands.

Thanks to the new technologies the trends within the labour market will be subject to change and in this way fewer people may prefer to live in cities. Labour-intensive employment areas are increasing day by day including the emerging branches of labour in the field of advanced technologies, in the field of education-training, home care or institutional care for the elderly and patients.

Financial systems should be perceived merely as one of the inputs of the economy amongst others. Unless more people earn their income primarily through production then unemployment will increase. There is surely an exit from each crisis. In order to secure a structural recovery such an exit should be accompanied by production based on the basic needs of human beings, sustainable development, investments made to educate people throughout the lifecourse for more efficient employment, skills based and vocational/professional training, and on-the-job training.

Greater importance should be attached to the development of employment friendly policies and the principles of decent work which include:

- * proportionately charging lower taxes and lower premiums from lower wage earners,
- * wage policies based on productivity and efficiency,
- * flexible working hours,
- * encouraging the employment of women,
- * encouraging the employment of senior citizens,



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* targeting the employment of more than one member in each family,

* making the necessary arrangements in agriculture and husbandry policies to address the hidden unemployment in agriculture.

It should be noted that as the labour markets become more rigid, unemployed people's hope to find new jobs is fading. Social security should have a balanced distribution in the society. Public pension systems should cover the fundamental pension rights of individuals, whereas people should exert additional effort to win further pension rights, and should also benefit from private insurance schemes.

It is necessary for all societies to benefit from the social capital offered by the elderly. As senior citizens, our main duties in achieving global recovery are as follows:

* promote the culture of coexistence,

* interconnect cultures without letting them segregate from one another,

* protect our similarities and differences without causing too much polarization,

* create an atmosphere of love in the world,

* make sure that love and mutual understanding is being spread especially among youth and children through our face-to-face encounters,

* enable dialogues that will not only bridge different cultures but also different generations,

* make sure that our words do translate into sincere actions.

It is very important and very much needed that young people work hand in hand with the elderly for the future world. As we are able to utilise the wisdom, the experience, the energy and creativity of senior citizens and youth together, then we can definitely come up with effective and wholesome solutions to all kinds of problems of the world.

i From the Speech of J.C. Kapur who had sent his text prior to his passing.

ii International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights