

FOREWORD

There is much now to indicate that contemporary trends in civilisational development are reflecting the mutual impacts of two main factors, i.e. global change and the concept of sustainable development. Any more accurate reading of those trends requires, not merely that the factors involved are perceived, but also that the nature of the mutual linkages between them be recognised. For what we have in the first case are the dynamics, scope and consequences of global economic, social and natural transformations on a scale not hitherto encountered during the history of our planet. On the other hand, in the second case what is involved is adaptation to such a concept for development as will ensure a balance between humankind's civilisational aspirations and the safeguarding of nature in the longer (indeed the very long) term. The kind of equilibrium being referred to here can only be achieved at all where the initiatives pursued by a local community also take account of the global perspective.

The particular circumstance of a meeting that reflected upon ongoing global changes and on the sustainable-development concept is that it leads to the publication here of texts marking the 30th anniversary of the publication of the so-called “Brundtland Report”. This is taking place in the context of the journal known as *Papers on Global Change PAS*, which is by definition devoted to identifying, analysing and forecasting processes ongoing in today's world.

Indeed, each of the texts presented here has its own perspective on how to conceptualise the relationship pertaining between global transformations and the idea of sustainable development. Moreover, each paper reveals the heuristic utility characterising a humanism thus-far ignored in matters seemingly long reserved as the fiefdom of the technical and natural sciences. The humanist voice in this area would in fact seem to be much-needed, given the extent to which it points out key aspects of ongoing changes that are not necessarily perceptible to representatives of the remaining types of knowledge. The aspects in question relate mainly to the civilisational nature of today's changes which reach to the roots of the modern-era processes shaping Western culture. In this area, humanist contributions manifest themselves as efforts are mobilised to build the kind of civilisation that will (unlike the still-dominant technocratic civilisation) take full account of postulates arising from the sustainable-development concept.

Indeed, a postulate inspired by sustainable development – to the effect that a new model for civilisation needs to be built – finds its reflection in each of the texts included in this volume of *Papers on Global Change PAS*. For a humanist perspective is here applied to such issues as:

- the reconciliation of the idea of sustainable development with a postulate that the long-term safeguarding of Earth-life entails a cosmic perspective (**Prof. Z. Piątek**);
- the search for the basic prerequisites underpinning cooperation between the propagators of different depictions of animate nature as they operate in the service of the sustainable-development concept (**Prof. Z. Lepko**);
- the potential enjoyed by religion when it comes to the promotion and implementation of the sustainable-development concept (**Prof. R. F. Sadowski**);
- the postulates for Earth's sustainable developed contained in Papal Encyclicals and in international agendas (**Prof. M. Gutry-Korycka**);
- the search for a balance between theory and practice in nature conservation (**Prof. Z. Mirek and Prof. Z. Witkowski**);
- the role of global education in building a solidaritous and just world (**Dr M. Kaniewska, Dr M. Klimski**);
- a postulate regarding accelerated implementation of sustainable-development goals and principles (**Dr A. Kassenberg**).

The presented subject matter at the interface between global change and sustainable development here gains further significant augmentation in the so-called **Warsaw Appeal for the Sustainable Development of the World** (page 103), which was adopted by participants at the Conference entitled *Theoria and Praxis of Sustainable Development*, on March 20th 2017, to mark the 30th anniversary of the release of the UN's *Our Common Future*, otherwise known as the Brundtland Report. It is worth mentioning that the article *A Postulate for Accelerated Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals and Principles* (**Dr A. Kassenberg**) formed the basis for the elaboration of this Appeal. The 30-year perspective on a report promoting the idea of sustainable development allows for a summarising of the efforts made, and the effects achieved, when it comes to building a more sustainable world, while also providing for an assessment of the prospects for these to be intensified further. The Warsaw Appeal represents that kind of attempt to both describe the current state affairs as regards the implementation of the sustainable-development concept, and to determine the possibility for some acceleration of the work being done in Poland to achieve the objectives that concept generates.

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