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The Importance and Challenges of International Cooperation for Improving the Quality of Life in Developing Countries

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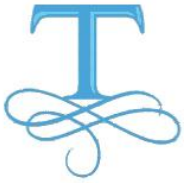
Abstract- Despite there are multilateral global problems in the World, there is still a lack of global networking to control them. The concept of international cooperation is not new but requires huge efforts and well-established strategies through trans-national cooperation network to share existing technology and policy to manage emerging and chronic threats on human kinds. Therefore, coordinating and support action plans for collaborative projects between countries are the key components after identification of fundamental problems. International cooperation carries out a broad range of activities and is the best approach to provide solutions for a better life for future generations. **Keywords:** *International Cooperation, Environment, Globalization, Health, Quality of Life*



I. Introduction

There is no doubt that as the world population increases, all kind of challenges increase exponentially for humankind. It is common to hear a list of problems that a demographic explosion has attached upon, such as energy supply depletion, environmental degradation, food insecurity, unemployment raise, water scarcity [1]. From a Malthusian perspective, the formula seems too simplistic: the provision of goods to withstand the population worldwide never rise as fast as the demands for such goods by the human population [2]. Prominent scientists and environmental activists usually share this point of view, as the Nobel-Prize winner International Panel on Climate Change, for instance [3]. On the other hand, there are the so-called “cornucopians” (after the mythical horn-of-plenty), who instead of blaming overpopulation as the underlying cause of the economic crisis, state that is poverty and issues of social injustice about the uneven distribution of wealth behind the environmental degradation we are witnessing [4]. To the latter the problem may be solved through the advancement of technical solutions, innovations and global development plans, while avoiding the taking of measures likely to affect the lifestyles that shaped post-industrial societies. This position though, has been criticized by international leaders concerned with a more durable welfare for humankind, like former United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan, whose opening speech for the World Summit in Johannesburg back in 2002 warned about the misleading of extreme points of view that minimizes the real ecological problems we are facing or favor the economic growth at any price [5]. Nevertheless, in between

both apparently irreconcilable neo-Malthusian and Cornucopian perspectives, there is a window of opportunity for cooperation to enhance the capacity of nations to promote policies that increase global stability and reach sustainable development. Looking for the Aristotle’s right balance (away from the “dark sides” of being dramatically pessimistic or worrisome over optimistic), many countries are already taking actions to a more cooperative economic approach. Garret Hardin stated that there is a naive ethical position of thinking possible a healthy environment of an individual or nation, unless everybody follows the same path, because there always be individuals (or nations) who will take advantage of the good will of the others, passing over any other right or law in order to crop only personal benefits in the short-term, no matter the other’s common interest or compromising the future of the upcoming generations [6]. Challenging such “Tragedy of the Commons” theory, recent field studies provide evidence that it is possible to influence the levels of trust and cooperation among individuals sharing a common resource [7]. However, a major challenge is to transfer these findings unto a broader context of nations. Meetings of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (as the one that took place in Durban, South Africa known as the COP 17 are good examples of the frequent efforts made in this regard [8]. As quoted by Virginia Dandan in the opening of COP 17, “The world is calling for genuine international solidarity and multilateralism, and for its leaders to take a leap of faith in unison, and as one” and added, “greater cooperation and solidarity is required now than ever before” [8]. Ever in history the interdependence of countries places the world closer to the Marshall McLuhan’s global village concept, where cooperation among nations (however imperfect)



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becomes the key strategy for a real world-wide development [9, 10]. Here is the convergent point between the neo-Malthusians and the Cornucopians. Advances in Information Technology (IT) make the Planet seem smaller despite the amount of people living on it; therefore, it should be a concern not taking advantage of a more and efficient communications means, and the progress of science and technology as well, to better off the world living conditions. Certainly the degree of cooperation among nations will depend much on the political, economic, and cultural similarities, in order to set more equitable and longer lasting links [11]. It is noteworthy, however, that cooperation is not entirely synonymous of globalization, but it is indeed an essential component of it (as essential as to guarantee “survival of humankind” in words of Karl Deutsch) [12]. Mutual understanding of sharing technology and experiences between countries is an important step to initiate a healthy cooperation. When talking about international cooperation, it is of reference the United Nations legacy; even though it is not the largest or even strongest international organization in the world (there are other non-governmental organizations whose membership is greater than the UN, as the Federation Internationale de Football Association FIFA). When the United Nations was founded back in 1945 as an international organization aiming at keeping peace worldwide and promoting social and friendly ties among nations, never imagined how necessary this paradigm would become. Beyond issues of national security, the same organization has broaden the scope into many other fields of human assistance and sustainable development, such as disaster relief, food security, democracy and global health. In order to have the impact expected of making of this Planet a better place for

living, this inclusive approach proved to be correct. The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set forth in the 2005 World Summit were reaffirmed in 2010 during the 65th session of the General Assembly, in order to keep alive the promise of achieving them by 2015 [13, 14]. This is perhaps the greatest effort made by humankind world-wide to improve the natural and social conditions of its existence. Unfortunately, there are many obstacles along the way that have to be solved if the MDG are to be met. Just as an example, recent budget cut off to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization threatens goal number 2 for universal education, whereas also damages goal number 8 as affect relationship and cooperation among partner economies.

There are many countries having chronic hunger, environmental and occupational issues and poverty which may be prevented and overcome if the proper and sustainable solutions were transferred into areas. Policy and advocacy on international level are important to implement these approaches to solve these problems. International research collaboration is a good way to improve the sustainability of primary needs in especially the developing countries where fundamental human needs are not well provided. Especially millions of people in this region have faced several complicated problems such as environment, food security, hygiene, etc. For instance, it is important that international cooperation is focusing on food safety and sanitation to reduce the burden of disease and improve the lives of the poor in this region. Furthermore, there are still millions of people working under the poor conditions which have accelerated work-related diseases, for example asbestos [15]. It is obvious that the developing countries have the lesson from the past of developed countries which



is the clue for improving a total quality of life of a people under the poor life condition .Eventually, effective and strategic collaboration plans should be initiated to deal with global problems before too late.

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