

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: REVITALIZING THE SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to inform about the history of deconstruction of sustainability by man and the consequent imposition of growth model on (purely) capitalists bases. Resulting from bibliographical and documentary research it shows several aspects of the succession of events that culminated in the uncontrolled destruction (unconsciously) of nature. Designed from the key ideas of various authors (sociologists, economists, biologists, ecologists etc.), this paper tries to reconcile modernity and modernization, as well as mitigate the gap of understanding between the social actors that promote the development and those others responsible for the protection and preservation of nature. It emphasizes that the change of individual values is necessary for the architecture and implementation of environmental management institutions, and states that the organizational development is still an appropriate tool to leverage the modern-day demands, since its concept is closely linked to the desire for change and adaptive capacity of the organization for this transformation. Finally, it is necessary to research how much they earned and you can still profit by adopting the thought reform, the comprehension as a whole, and the sustainable management of business.

Keywords: MANAGEMENT; SUSTAINABILITY; ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

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INTRODUCTION

This essay shows that development and the environment can dwell together harmoniously. Man is not a supra-natural, infra-natural or extra-natural element, he is part of nature. Until the Enlightenment, human beings lived with nature on a tolerable basis. After the Enlightenment, with the emergence of capitalism, the increasing speed of inventions and demand directed towards innovative technology pushed man down an unfeasible path for his own life and that of all other life on Earth. The following text leads to the causes and effects of the aforementioned allegations. It also presents Ecological Management and Sustainable Development as instruments for the reduction of conflicts with social creature habits.

The text is divided into three parts: a) the first reports on economic rationality in detriment to man himself as well as all living beings; b) the second deals with ecological management as an instrument to overcome the dichotomy development - environment; c) the third shows organizational development as an instrument of planned change. Finally, a conclusion is given to the essay.

1. REFORMULATING THOUGHTS.

Our technology has become so powerful that – consciously or inadvertently - *we are becoming a danger to ourselves*. While saving billions of lives and improving well-being science and technology have connected the planet in a slow, anastomotic union. At the same time they have changed the world in such a way that many people do not feel at home on Earth. New evils have been created which are difficult to see or understand. They are problems which cannot be resolved immediately and which will not be solved without challenging those in power (SAGAN, 1998, emphasis added).

Two great revolutions marked the 18th and 19th centuries. In the former, the Industrial Revolution took place, which was predominantly economic. It began in England in the second half of the century. At the end of the 19th century the French Revolution arose, in essence, being fundamentally political.

The Industrial Revolution produced a group of transformations in different aspects of economic activity, in areas such as industry, agriculture, transport and banking. It revolutionized the work process by creating a mechanized factory system, with lowered costs. This system was able to rapidly produce large quantities of items and created its own market. It became independent from demand (HOBSBAUM, 1981).

From a political standpoint, the events of the 18th century brought the destruction of social and feudal relationships which existed at the time. There was a transfer of power, from nobility to economic power. The economic and political initiative passed to the new capitalistic class (BERNAL, 1976).

The lack of resources and the predominance of the economic factor, above all things led men to think of earth as a large spaceship. Gaia. As described by Lovelock (1997), Gaia is a complex entity which includes the terrestrial biosphere, the oceans, the soil; a whole constituted from feedback or a cybernetic system, which seeks the physical-chemical optimization of the environment in order to give continuity to life on the planet. By getting ill or using up the resources, be it water, soil, air or the biosphere, those on the planet could contribute to the extinction of various types of life, including human life.

The economic rationality is not sufficient for prosperity of the nations. A prosperous and enduring society requires stability, order and honesty; however one must remember that these values are not absolutes. Even stable countries suffer periodically from effervescent policies, human loss and environmental catastrophes. Stability and order can come into conflict with creativity, sometimes pushed by economic competition. Many times it is

necessary to work in surroundings in certain disarray in order to produce innovations (MCRAE, 1998).

According to Landes (1998), understanding history is necessary. Some say that historians like to look back. They try to understand and explain what has been documented. However, economists also want to know about the past, but believing that they will only be able to know it as they incorporate theory with logic. Landes states that:

A new horseman is added to the riders of the Apocalypse: the ecological disaster. We do not need to be concerned about depleting the different resources, for technology will find a substitute. We do need to be seriously concerned about the progressive and possibly irreversible damage we are inflicting on the environment. This threat to well-being is directly connected to economic development. Wasting materials, producing trash, pollution and environmental damage increase with wealth and production. *Ceteris paribus*, the rich are the ones who poison the earth.

Man has sought after and opened a scientific path in search of all the answers to all his questions and doubts. He chose this path thinking that he would gain profit, large profits. However, what is seen is a decadent, insufficient model due to its own limitations. Science does not have all the answers, much less the constitution or a meeting of known parties, nor that which is studied. These do not represent the wholeness of a system; these do not show reality. That is why problems arise.

Science has not developed randomly. It was born from two prevalent ideologies. As Webb said (apud LEIS, 1999), the peculiarities of the modern world are not derived directly from the importance reached by the force of the market or of the government. The 20th century was organized around these two, but they were expressed ideologically in terms of liberalism (market) and socialism (government). They were effective for a time, producing

social transformations which were being demanded, although many strategies did not lead to the expected results (LEIS, 1999).

Little by little the process of secularization of modern life developed a special social behavior, impregnated with political and economic bias. It began to weaken traditional social behavior, including family ties, moral and religious values.

The Western world always assumed that all reason, wisdom and truth were concentrated in its civilization. These Westerners saw other nations as backward and childish. In these one could not find any real wisdom, only mythology and/or superstition, which were cause for disregard. The Western world adopted scientific principles, valid through the middle of the 20th century, of the man-nature separation, or rather, eliminating everything that was natural and separating subject and object. How can you know about things if you remove their context? Furthermore, science was intimately connected to quantification. That which could not be quantified simply did not exist. Those Westerners forgot that quantities do not express quality. Quality is expressed by poetic and mythical knowledge (MORIN, 2000).

When reporting on the content of scientific knowledge, Santos (1993) corroborates with the ideas of Morin and states:

Being that minimum knowledge closes the doors to other areas of knowledge about the world, modern scientific knowledge is sad and disenchanting knowledge which turns nature into an automaton, or as Prigogine says, a terribly stupid interlocutor. By demeaning nature, the scientist demeans himself as he reduces experimental dialogue itself by exercising prepotency over nature. Being founded in mathematical rigor, scientific rigor quantifies, which, by quantifying, disqualifies the rigor. By making phenomena objective, it thus degrades them by characterizing phenomena and thus making a caricature of them.

In short, what Boaventura de Sousa Santos wants to emphasize is that by affirming the personality of the scientist, the rigor destroys the personality of nature.

Only after the second half of the last century did the scenario begin to change. The whole process of modernization of both ideologies started to lose legitimacy and they were confronted by moral, cultural and environmental conflicts. Government and markets began to be questioned. Modernity upheld itself through the ignorance of the biological fundamentals of political governability (LEIS, 1999).

As the end of the century approached, the reductionism of science was losing space, to the point of Capra (1998), while lecturing on 'The Machine of Newton's World,' stated,

The excessive emphasis of the Cartesian method led to the characteristic fragmentation of our thought in general..., and led to the generalized attitude of reductionism in science – the belief that all aspects and complex phenomena can be understood if reduced to their constituent parts.

Capra (1998) also mentions, in the chapter , 'A New Vision of Reality,' aspects of a new concept of life, coming from a new way of inter-relationship of the government:

The new vision reality is based on the awareness of the government concerning the inter-relationship and essential interdependence of all phenomena, whether physical, biological, psychological, social or cultural. This vision transcends current subject concepts and boundaries and will be explored in the context of new institutions. At the moment there is no well established structure whether conceptual or institutional which accommodates the formulation of a new paradigm. But the outline of such a structure is being formulated by many individuals, communities and organizations which are developing new ways of thinking and which are being established according to new principles.

The planet is alive and suffering the consequences of foolishness and human exaggeration, which makes Sach (1986) verbalize the idea of 'non-growth':

After the anti-romance and counter-culture, non-growth arises. There are three very different symptoms of the re-questioning of values by a society which seeks new ideological references to problems which are still unsolvable. There is the symptom of disrespect of the spectacular progress of material growth, or what this causes: a generalized discontent of youth, the persistence of misery, the aggression against the environment and the frustration of the Third World which begins to ask itself about its own concept of development, founded in efficiency, whether it should be substituted by freedom (Goulet, 1973), aimed at social justice and the creation of a new man.

Marked by economic traumas, political crises and successive environmental catastrophes, the 20th century was engulfed in contradictions. Capitalism did not promote the alleged harmony, much less the stability it promised. The invisible hand of the market generated contradictions and allowed for, even in moments of triumph, disasters and injustice – which are the essence of the model itself (SADER, 2000).

It is well to explain that there is a relationship between the global increment of production and the production of entropy, thus the entropic death of the planet is associated with economic rationality. The reductionist thought is invigorated.

Thus, a reform of paradigm is necessary, since the current model begins to stumble because it has dismemberment and reduction as its bases. It is as MORIM (1999) stated, “He wanted to know by separating; he separated the inseparable and forgot that everything is related.”

Technological rationality, the effective search for productive processes, the relationship with the acceleration and accumulation of production lead to the limits of the planet. The environmental crisis is a crisis of production growth. The environmental rationality joins a series of values concerning social equality, in the question of economic sustainability and transforms the way one unites values with knowledge. It is important that under the base of productive rationality there is a substantive rationality, which is the set of

values. These are the objectives of life which are formed by values chosen by society and not directed by a law of the market or by technological efficiency.

According to Bursztyn (2001), a new type of human development can be practiced through scientific ethic. He states that this movement is

a possible utopia and its construction is plausible: because the current crisis of paradigms which move industrial progress, authorized people to dare to think about another way of human development. The formula is not yet elaborated. With renewed ethics, science could fulfill an important role in this sense. So, as Boaventura de Sousa Santos, warned do not disregard the visionary.

Hayward (1994) states that there certainly are real disputes between ecology and enlightenment, but they can be better understood and resolved by thinking beyond such dichotomies. They can be overcome by reformed thought, one of union and contextualization.

To end this first part, businessmen, governments and society should join forces in a common cause to transform the *modus operandi* of the production of goods and services in the intent to care for the energy and ecological efficiency of the planet. Products can be made to be used for a longer period of time, to last longer and to be recycled. This is the only way to journey to sustainability of management and to the existence, which is still capitalist, of mankind.

2. ECOLOCLIAL MANAGEMENT: PARTNERSHIP AND A CHANGE OF VALUES TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY.

There was a rise of various environmental organs and special legislation in the 1970's and the 1980's industries adopted audits and environmental management in order to observe the norms and procedures demanded by public entities. The intent was to deal with the pleas

directed at the improvement of the quality of life. After all of this, the concept of Sustainable Development was adopted in the 1990's.

Although practice still does not match the discourse of many public and/or private institutions, the rules of command and control are firmly consolidated. The problem is that the structures and operation of these institutions are still distant from blending growth and development into the same platform, which would generate sustainable planning and management.

Many administrators and businessmen introduced programs of recycling, measures to save energy and other ecological innovations such as filters or catalysts in their companies. These practices spread rapidly and soon various business pioneers were developing systems which included administration with ecological characteristics. As time went by, they verified that besides the ecological gains, they also experienced a reduction in costs and an increase in revenue.

The benefits of an administration with an ecological awareness can be translated into human survival, public consensus, market opportunities, lowered risk, reduction of costs and personal integrity. As Andrade, Tachizawa and Carvalho (2000) allude to, there are six principles which are considered essential to long term success of a company which is operated responsibly. They are quality, creativity, humanity, profitability, continuity and loyalty. The authors also discuss the three key element characteristics of administrative strategies with ecological awareness. Those are innovation, cooperation and communication.

Environmental management is not limited to the science of administration, whether public or private. It joins questions related to sociology, economy, finance, theories of government, theories of organization, psychology, law, planning, among others. Thus, the problem of environmental management is not merely administrative.

Ecological awareness in Brazil is opening the way for the development of new products, new business opportunities and new work markets, not only in the industrial sector but also in the service sector. Some examples of this new tendency have a daily presence in media. For example, cleaning products are biodegradable, herbicides are less toxic, cars have fuel injection, vehicles run on bio fuels or natural gas, agendas and notebooks are made of recycled material. It is well to state that the results are being reflected in nature as well as in the financial statements.

New projects in the environmental area have created an entirely new market, broadening the work market for ecologists and other professions related to environmental protection. These jobs are being filled by specialized professionals in various areas including managers, consultants, tour guides, lawyers, economists, sociologists and many other environmental specialists. These new jobs are being created to meet the needs of organizations in adapting to environmental issues, as well as socio-political demands.

It is well to observe that this new thought needs to be accompanied by a change in values. It needs to move from expansion to conservation, from quantity to quality, from domination to partnership. This new thinking and new value system, together with the corresponding perception and new practices constitute a new vision of the world as an integrated whole, not as a group of disassociated parts. This is a systematic vision with an ecological perception.

Ecological management assumes there must be a transformation of current thinking, that is, change purely mechanical thought to systemic thought. The world is no longer seen as a machine and begins to be seen as a living system. This new administrative style is known as *Systemic Management*.

It is relevant to observe the words of Andrade, Tachizawa and Carvalho (2000) which point to ecological management:

environmental management is associated with the idea of solving the environmental issues in a company. It lacks an ethical dimension. Its main motives are obeying the law and improving the company's image. *Ecological management, on the other hand, is motivated by ecological ethics and its concern for the well-being of future generations.* Its starting point is a change in values within the business culture (emphasis added).

Deep ecology substitutes the ideology of economic growth with the idea of ecological sustainability.

Company planners concerned about the issue of the environment face various dilemmas. When attempting to adopt a more ecological focus, they find themselves returning to the demands of conflicting interests, which are in opposition. The main ones are shareholders who want immediate results. Their expectations are concerned with balance sheets and financial reports.

Ecological management is focused on the recognition that unlimited economic growth on a finite planet can only lead to disaster. Thus, it is obligatory to introduce ecological sustainability as a fundamental criterion of all business activities.

Little by little the ethics of this are being incorporated by organizations, but many pioneer and traditional companies reveal huge contrasts in their organizational culture. A pioneer company can have an excellent program of recycling, while paying low salaries, combating unions and not giving benefits such as health plans to employees and their families. A traditional company might invest in revolutionary research projects and the development of innovative ecological products, while at the same time conclude that the relative costs of fines compared to the cost of cleaning the environment is justifiable, short term. In other words it is cheaper to break the rules in Environmental Protection Areas (APA).

The challenge of harmonizing these concerns is the mission of the eco-administrator. He will be able to put strategies in operation and generate credibility with the action of

ecological management. These will tend to be effective when there are no differences between discourse and practice.

Ecological management is motivated by a change in business culture values. These move from domination to partnership, from the ideology of economic growth to that of ecological sustainability. This implies a new administrative style, that of systemic administration.

Donaire (1994) points out that industry goes through three phases, superposed several times, depending on the degree of awareness of the environmental issues within the company. These three are necessary to reach the necessary maturity. They are environmental control of external emissions, integrations; and environmental control of the industrial processes and practices; and the third, the integration of environmental control in administrative management.

The first phase can be characterized by the installation of control equipment such as chimneys and sewer systems, and the maintenance of the existing productive structures. This phase, in general, still entails high costs, in spite of the high efficiency of the installed equipment. Thus, this solution is not always seen as effective and is highly questioned by the public and the industry itself.

The second phase arises in response to the dissatisfaction generated by the first. In it the environmental aspect is integrated into the productive practices and processes. It stops being an activity of controlling pollution and begins to be a function of production, where the basic principle is preventing pollution. Within this context, the protection of the environment moves from punishment, in the form of fines and sanctions, to the scope of threats and opportunities. These are where the consequences begin to mean positions regarding the competition and the company's permanence in or exit from the market.

It is in this context that the concept of environmental excellence is inserted. The industry cannot be evaluated only on its performance. Its performance regarding the environment must be considered as well. Environmental excellence begins to be considered necessary to the success of the company. Through its appeals and practices, the company is able to transform the challenges and demands of the market into opportunities such as increased profits and the development of sustainable actions.

The implementation of policy and environmental management in the company is not easy. The first perception of ecological management is felt in the boardroom. The company's upper level administrators understand that ecological management is important and should be inserted in organizational policy. They recognize the need for specialized staff, but rarely do these ecological dictates reach the tactical and operational levels of the company. Ecological awareness permeates only the boardroom. Fortunately, over the last ten years this has begun to change. Many organizations are already internalizing this awareness at the three levels of business.

As Donaire (1994) states, this first step begins a chain reaction over time of an organizational commitment which reaches the line managers, those who are directly related to upper administrative levels. With the strategical and tactical staff already aware of ecological policy, the effective result in productive and administrative functions can be seen in the modification of processes, the demand for investments of resources and the modification of the organizational structure and culture themselves. It is at this moment that ecological maturity takes place in the company.

The newly developed administration needs the constant incorporation of emerging content from the social fabric. Various important authors in the business world consider administration to be an area of human activity which is extremely important. Why? Simply because we live in a civilization in which the cooperative effort of man is the basis of society.

In any project, the efficiency with which people work together to reach common objectives depends principally on their capacity to exercise administrative functions.

Administration with its new concepts is considered one of the main keys to the solution of the worst problems which currently afflict the modern world. It is as Andrade, Tachizawa and Carvalho (2000) clearly stated concerning the development and underdevelopment of countries, “there are no developed or under-developed countries, but rather those which know how to administer existing technology, their available resources and potential and those which do not.”

The object of the study of administration has always been the organization. This was initially understood as a group of positions and tasks, then as a group of organs and functions. This was followed by the unfolding of a complex gamut of variables until one reaches more modern theories of administration.

Since the challenges and changes in international and national markets take place at high speed, it is common to find professionals and organizations unprepared for this new era. Aiming at the implementation of these changes in a planned manner, the Theory of Organizational Development arose. It is not the latest theory, nor the most modern, but it is the most flexible and adaptable for that which this essay seeks.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNED CHANGE.

As Beckhard (1972) says, organizational development is a planned effort to include the entire organization, administered from the top by means of planned interventions in procedures through the science of behavior. The concept of organizational development is closely related to the concepts of change and to the organization's adaptive capacity to change.

Arising in the 1960's, organizational development is not the fruit of a single agent. It is drawn from a complex group of ideas regarding man, the organization, the environment in the sense of allowing for growth and development according to the company's potential.

Upon rejecting the traditional authority-obedience model, some authors see the genesis of organizational development programs in the ideas provided by Mayo, Roethlisberger and Lewin. These ideas value the participation of employees as well as personal development. In their opinion, organizational development is based on the recognition of the importance of the company's culture concerning the behavior of its members. Any organizational development project will focus on the behavior of individuals, even if the necessary changes will be found in the area of technology, in adopted administrative and operational systems or even in the company's organizational structure (FERREIRA, REIS E PEREIRA, 1997). Organizational Development is a process of planned change

...which aims at making the organization more efficient, adaptable to change, especially those of a social or technological nature and which seeks harmony between meeting human needs and the achieving the organization's goals (MOURA, 1978).

Catalogued by Andrade, Tachizawa and Carvalho (2000) for its excellence, organizational development starts with the following dynamic concepts. There is the concept of organization and the organizational culture; the concept of change; the objectives of change and the concept of development. The concept of organization for organizational development specialists is typically behaviorist. Lawrence & Lorsch (1972) propose an operational definition of organization. They say an organization is a coordination of different activities coming from individual contribution, with the goal of bringing about planned transactions with the surroundings.

The rise of internal or external forces upon the organization, which create the need for change in some part or parts of the organization, begin the process of organizational change. Ecological management is an exogenous force upon the organization which provokes the need for change through Brazilian industrial organizations aiming at the survival of a market which is more and more competitive.

Organizational development emphasizes behavior at an individual level in order to reach organizational behavior. The organizational norms and values can be altered through the change of the individual's norms and values. The most frequently sought change is the equalization of power in order to produce participative administration. If this equalization is not realized, no other important restructuring is necessary within the organization since it will not give desired results. As mentioned before, in ecological management there is a strong tie between the degree of maturity of the management system and the commitment and participation of the employees.

Organizational development is necessary whenever an organization competes and fights for survival in times of change. Rationality and efficiency must permeate every solution for problems in this area.

Andrade, Tachizawa and Carvalho (2000) point out five basic types of objectives of change.

a) *Strategic Objectives*: These are the objectives of change which aim at changing relationships between the organization as a whole and its surroundings. For example, with objectives revised one might see new behavior concerning products or clients, geographical expansion, among others.

b) *Technological objectives*: These are the objectives directly related to changes in the technology of production, manufacturing, equipment or other physical parts of the organization.

c) *Structural objectives*: These are the objectives of change concerned with alterations in the relationships of subordination. For example, there are the processes of communication/decision, relationships of authority and similar aspects of autonomy of an organization.

d) *Behavioral objectives*: These are the objectives which focus on the change of beliefs, values, attitudes, interpersonal relationships, group behavior, inter-group behavior and similar human phenomena.

e) *Programs*: These are the objectives of change that are aimed at changing the structure or aspects of the plans of technical implementation in production, marketing, research and development and other areas. They may include changes in distribution channels, requisites and procedures of quality control as well as sales territory.

It is well to clarify that organizational development includes a project of change which reaches the entire organization, with the purpose of improving performance and increasing efficiency, through the optimization of the use of resources, for example, and the efficiency of the fulfillment of organizational mission and objectives. Organizational development adopts a four stage model: 1) diagnosis, the generation of information about the cause of the problem; 2) action plan, the strategic intervention for the implementation of change; 3) intervention, the execution of an approved plan and the use of systematic methods for changes in behavior; and 4) evaluation and control, data collection to compare a former situation to a post intervention position.

As Ferreira (1989) alleges, organizational development goes back to a process of planned change which aims at touching the efficiency of the organization. Efficiency is anchored in a change in people's behavior so that the expected results are reached. Development of the organization occurs as the development of the individual members is promoted.

Organizational development continues as a business philosophy in the 21st century, since current business management has already understood that change is necessary for survival in conditions which are difficult to forecast and in surroundings which are in constant change. The institution must anticipate the behavior of the surrounding forces which can influence their future plans. It then must seek competitive advantages to build and /or maintain a consolidated position in the market.

Organizations are living entities, and thus go through stages of maturation. Change is a process. Companies must take advantage of the opportunities and eliminate, or at least minimize the threats of the surroundings. They must refine strong points and strengthen weak points. All this requires perception, development of ideas, planning, action and evaluation/control. A living being evolves as it is capable of throwing off hindrances and obstacles which lead to lagging behind, getting stuck, failing or defeat.

The idea explored by Piaget in children's learning process, today extrapolates to adult life in groups and organizations. He is the one who elaborated the theory which shows the relative stages of child development. These are characterized by certain problems and dilemmas which need to be solved in order for the children to be capable of understanding and generating skills and competences so they can try to ponder, for themselves, the challenges and questions of subsequent stages. Regarding organizations, a similar process takes place. The difference is that in the latter, it is accompanied by other ingredients such as technology, context, culture and economy.

Facing the new challenges and complexity of a myriad of variables which act upon organizational society impels the demand for a reformulation of the role of the organization's director. Besides supervising and directing a group of the organization's operations, for which he is responsible, the director must dedicate himself to the task of conceiving and planning, together with those who promote the organizational dynamic, i.e. the employees. He must

focus on the future of the company in order to guarantee its survival and permanence. The Agenda 21 in substance, requires the voice of the community in management as well, while seeking consensus, cooperation, democracy and autonomy. In this way, organizations with this view implant an innovative administration, with consolidated development and planned control.

The Brundtland (1987) Commission's report, *Our Common Future*, showed the relevance of environmental protection in the realization of sustainable development. The Business Charter for Sustainable Development (1991) highlighted environmental management principles for organizations in order to adopt practices aimed at sustainable development. It is clear that organizations need to share the understanding that there must be a common objective and not a conflict between economic development and environmental protection, now, as well as for future generations.

Donaire (1999) explains that the National Confederation of Commerce in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, through the Chamber of International Commerce (CCI) recognized that environmental protection must be included among key priorities to be considered in business transactions. Thus, in November, 1990, sixteen principles of environmental management were defined. They were priority of organization, integrated management, process of improvement, education of personnel, priority of focus, products and services, consumer education, equipment and operationalization, research, preventative focus, suppliers and subcontractors, emergency plans, transfer of technology, contribution to common efforts, transparency of attitude, service and divulgation.

The strategy of sustainable development aims at promoting harmony between human beings and between mankind and nature.

CONCLUSION

Many things still need to be investigated, but the old Cartesian perception has already begun its journey of transformation. The neo-classic and/or conventional economy, the strategic plans without the environmental factor; the linear, weighty, inefficient organizational structures; directors and shareholders who are only concerned with immediate company profits and the governments which are not tuned in with the management of environmental resources are all going through rapid change. These changes include adaptations on the path to efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in actions. The planet is made up of links, interaction and inter-relationships. It has a wide web which perennially metabolizes the flow and processes, the procedures and relationships between the ecosystems. It is man's place to build an intelligent, ethical and harmonious relationship between them and the economic system, as well as, and mainly, between men themselves.

It is necessary to research how much has been gained and how much could be gained by adopting reformed thinking and sustainable business management. Thoughts, management and system tools, and socio-environmental networks are needed. However, the most important still is the thought about an cross-generational projection for the quality of life for all.

The environmental issues being discussed since 1972 have been made appropriate in time and space and have gained ground in the political, legal, technological, institutional, academic and cultural fields. Much more needs to be done, but these last four decades present positive results compared with the actions implemented, although the debt business has with the environmental still is huge. The next forty years will define the health of the planet, the permanence of healthy life on Earth and the destiny of man facing his own inventions.

Many affirm that we should leave a better planet for humanity, but when will we think about having better men for earth?

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