

**HUMAN SURVIVAL
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**
**A study and Critique of the
Vancouver Declaration**

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Preface

The Vancouver Declaration on Survival in the 21st Century was the outcome of the International Symposium on Culture and Sciences in the 20th Century, held in Vancouver, Canada, between 10th and 15th September, 1989, under the auspices of UNESCO in collaboration with UNESCO's National Commission in Canada, the Canadian Royal Society and the University of British Columbia. The symposium was attended by 21 scientists from 15 countries.

The Vancouver Declaration reflects the deep concerns of the participants in the 25th session of the General Assembly, and also complements the 1986 Declaration.

The introduction of the Vancouver Declaration states:

The Survival of the planet has become a central and immediate concern. The present situation requires urgent measures in all fields—scientific, cultural, economic and political, and a greater sensitization of all mankind. We must make common enemy of any action that threatens the balance within our environment or reduces our legacy to future generations.

In view of the accelerating rate of population growth, depletion of natural resources, and the collapse of environmental balance, the Vancouver Declaration discussed such issues as humankind confronting survival, the origins of the problems and possible solutions that may provide a new framework within which Man can survive in dignity and harmony with his environment.

The Declaration was sent by the Director of UNESCO to UNESCO National Commissions all over the world. The Iranian Commission asked Iranian scholars and scientists for their consideration and evaluation of it.

The prominent scholar and distinguished Islamic philosopher, Mohammad Taqi Ja'fari, who has a wide interest in international and human problems, was kind enough as to read the Declaration and remark in detail on its contents.

Introduction

Once again, the mysterious laws of human life have awakened the conscience of certain contemporary high-ranking scholars, calling their attention to the horrifying decadence of Man's condition, spurred by his idolatry of wealth, power, hedonism, and egoism, and warning them about the gravity of the situation that is likely to annihilate the whole of humankind.

It can be readily contended that the outcome of this conference was a serious warning to humanity, clearly enunciating:

O men, rise, and correctly evaluate science, spiritualities, and values; moderate your urges for materialism, power, and hedonism, so that the 20th century would not mark the end of human existence on Earth.

A few months ago, a group of prominent scientists who participated a conference in Vancouver, Canada, unanimously adopted a Declaration. Having read the declaration in detail, I made certain points that occurred to me regarding its contents.

We all know that the dangerous divide made by certain writers between science and spirituality, values and transcendental norms, is of the main sources of the problems relating to the cultural, political, legal, moral and religious realms and realities.

This point is clearly tractable in this Declaration. It is thus incumbent upon us to expound on the artificiality of this distinction. The majority of contemporary thinkers and philosophers, both Eastern and Western, share our views, for they all subscribe to the fact that our planet faces a critical situation.

This critical situation stems from a number of causes, one of which is the distinction made by some thinkers between sciences and spiritual norms. Not long ago, some shallow minded individuals enthusiastically proclaimed the introduction of this novel theory about human knowledge. In this way, they paved the way for hedonists, egoists, and power-seekers, who, in turn, assisted them in thoroughly convincing naive academics. The most convincing reason for the invalidity of the distinction theory is the fact that the separation of sciences from values and spiritual norms has grafted a sense of futility onto human life. Whenever values and spiritual norms are branded as 'taboos', life itself emerges as a taboo and becomes riddled with torture and pain.¹

That the audacity and contempt displayed by the egoists *vis-a-vis* spirituality and lofty values has turned planet Earth into a 'hot engine' should take no one by surprise. Should such a thing not have happened it would have been a matter of considerable surprise since all scientific laws governing the universal order would have then been overruled.

1. Taboos are forbidden and disapproved acts that might spread in a society; at times they might even contradict logic and perceptions. In subsequent discussions I will further elaborate on this issue.

We do not know whether these pseudo-scientists have ever found the opportunity to ask themselves if there is any better proof for the scientific validity of spirituality and values other than the fact that disregard for values and spirituality has become the most serious and unprecedented menace to human existence. The truth is that a great deal of negligence and senselessness is required for Man not to notice that fire can set him ablaze, and that the causality that relates fire with burning does not differentiate between cotton and Man.

We should not overlook the fact that the argument about the threat to human existence inheres in the reality that the negligence of values and spirituality—the cornerstone of human dignity—must certainly result in the annihilation of Man.

If we were to retrospectively account for the applicability of the law of 'mutual conclusiveness' in human history, it would become evident that, thus far, millions of men, outstanding civilizations and numerous individual rights have been betrayed by the simple negligence of values and spirituality.

It would also become evident that power-seekers and egoists, rejecting the relevance of the 'musts' and the 'ifs' of everyday life, have manipulated man's obliviousness to the experiences of past generations. They project themselves as ends while using others as means.

What if someone asks, 'What is wrong with the Earth becoming a burning engine?'. He might be pointing out that the planet Earth, that used to be the ideal shelter for Man, is now becoming the scene for the survival of the fittest, in which the strong deludes himself into a futile life and the weak succumbs to pain and torture, and in which good and evil have lost all meaning. Then, so the argument might go, the Earth ought to be destroyed and, with it, the very life that has led Man to become a beast of burden. Though this rationalization is worth noting, nonetheless it neither addresses the real issue nor does it justify the abandonment of the Earth to the egoists so that they can do whatever they wish, turning the very last page of human history.

The contention 'Let all men be annihilated' is the very response forwarded by Einstein's colleague to the problem of the former. Einstein had warned that conflict could eventually culminate in the annihilation of Man. His colleague had, in turn, questioned Einstein's concern. Einstein finally argued that his colleague had been through tremendous suffering and had calculated and thought extensively but to no avail, otherwise he would not have responded as he did.²

If one concedes Man's annihilation out of weakness in the face of egoism and selfishness, such a concession is but suicide, betraying the will of Man, of God, and of human history.

Now, let us consider the Declaration issued at the Vancouver Conference.

M. T. JA'FARI
September 1989

2. I will elaborate on this story and its sources later on in this article.

**Message from the Director-General of UNESCO to the
Participants in the Symposium on Science and Culture for the 21st
Century: Agenda for Survival**

(Canada -Vancouver, 10th - 15th September 1989)

Until quite recently, all technical and scientific achievements were unquestioningly assumed to be advantageous, with little or no thought given to the harmful effects they might have on society and the environment, as well as the social and ethical problems arising from scientific progress.

In March 1986, a symposium organized in Venice by UNESCO, in cooperation with the Fondazione Cine, discussed the theme "Science and the Boundaries of Knowledge: The Prologue of our Cultural Past".

The Venice Symposium found that the present conception about the world tended to coincide with certain ideas fostered by the major cultural traditions of mankind. Moreover, the meeting concluded that too much of the progress achieved through the development of science and technology had come to represent a serious threat to the survival of humanity.

This was the reason behind the invitation to so many eminent scientists and distinguished personalities to meet in Vancouver in order to work out "an agenda for survival". Since our lives, and those of our children, may well depend on our having such an agenda, it is UNESCO's very sincere wish that your discussions will be stimulating and that the outcome of your deliberations will be successful.

Federico Mayor

Director – General

The Declaration of the Conference on Survival in the 21st Century, Vancouver

The survival of the planet has become of central and immediate concern. The present situation requires urgent measures in all sectors, scientific, cultural, economic and political, and a greater sensitization of all mankind. We must make common enemy: any action that threatens balance within our environment or reduces our legacy to future generations. Today, this is the objective of the Vancouver Declaration on Survival.

I. MANKIND CONFRONTING SURVIVAL

Our planet is unstable—a constantly changing heat engine. Life appeared on its surface about four billion years ago, and developed in balance with an environment where sudden unpredictable change is the norm. The discovery, over 200 years ago, of freed energy locked in fossil fuels has given humankind the power to dominate the whole planetary surface. In an unbelievably short span of time, unplanned and almost mindlessly, our species has become by far the largest factor for change on the planet.

The consequences have been drastic and unique in the history of our species. Our population has risen from 1 billion to over 5 billion, with a current doubling time of 30-40 years; a comparable increase in the use of fossil fuels leading to global pollution, climate and sea-level change; an accelerating destruction of the habitat of life, initiating a massive and irreversible episode of mass extinction in the biosphere the basis of the Earth's ecosystem; and an unimaginable expenditure of resources and human ingenuity on war and preparation for war all licensed by a belief in inexhaustible resources of the planet, encouraged by political and economic systems that emphasize short-term profit as a benefit, and disregard the real cost of production.

The situation facing mankind involves the collapse of any balance between our species and the rest of life on the planet. Paradoxically, at the time when we stand at the threshold of degeneration of the ecosystem and degradation of human quality of life, knowledge and science are now in a position to provide both the human creativity and the technology needed to take remedial action and to rediscover the harmony between nature and mankind. Only the social and political will is lacking.

II. THE ORIGINS OF THE PROBLEM

The origin of our present predicament lies fundamentally in certain developments in science that were essentially complete by the beginning of the century. Those developments, which are mathematically codified in a classical mechanical picture of the universe, gave to human beings a power over nature that

has, until recently, produced an ever-increasing, and seemingly boundless, supply of material commodities. Swept up in the exploitation of this power, humankind has tended to shift its values to those promoting the maximal realization of the material possibilities that this new power provides.

Suppressed, correspondingly, were the values associated with mankind. This omission of other human dimensions is precisely in line with the 'scientific' conception of the universe as a machine, and of man as nothing but a cog within it.

Man's conception of himself is a principal determinant of his values; it fixes the conception of 'self' in the appraisal of self interest. Thus, the ideological impoverishment associated with the view of man as a cog in a machine leads to the narrowing of values. However, scientific advances of the present century have shown this mechanical view of the universe to be untenable on purely scientific grounds.

Thus, the rational basis for the mechanical conception of Man has been invalidated.

III. ALTERNATIVE VISIONS

In contemporary science, the older, rigid mechanical picture of the universe has been replaced by concepts that permit a universe that is formed by a continual creative input that is not rigidly constrained by any mechanical law. Man himself becomes an aspect of this creative impulse, and is linked to the whole universe in an integral way that is not expressible within the older mechanistic framework. The 'self' thereby becomes converted from a deterministically controlled cog in a giant machine to an aspect of a free, creative impulse that is intrinsically and immediately tied to the universe as a whole.

Human values become, accordingly, in this new scientific view, enlarged into values consonant with those prevalent in earlier cultures. It is within the framework of the converging images of Man provided by recent scientific and cultural developments that we look for visions of a future that would allow man to survive in dignity and harmony with his environment.

The human species has reached limits in its use of the external world and also in its capacity to live in a changing social and cultural environment. Man's developing perceptions in science suggest that he might be able to recapture lost beliefs and varieties of spiritual experience.

The present critical situation in mankind's occupancy of the planet requires new visions, rooted in a variety of cultures, in contemplating the future.

The perception of an organic macrocosm that recaptures the rhythms of life would allow Man to reintegrate himself with nature and understand his relationship in space and time to all life and the physical world.

Recognition that a human being is an aspect of the creative process that gives form to the universe, enlarges Man's image of himself and allows him to transcend the egoism that is the principal cause of disharmony among his fellows and between mankind and nature.

The overcoming of fragmentation of the body-mind-spirit unity, brought about by unbalanced emphases on any one over the others, allows Man to discover within himself the reflection of the cosmos and its supreme unifying principle.

Such visions change the conception of Man in nature and call for a radical transformation of models of development; the elimination of poverty, ignorance and misery; the end of the arms race; introduction of new learning processes, educational systems and mental attitudes; implementation of better forms of redistribution to ensure social equity; a new design for living, based on a reduction of waste; respect for bio-diversity, socio-economic diversity, and cultural diversity that transcend outmoded concepts of sovereignty.

Science and technology are indispensable for the attainment of these goals but they can succeed only through an integration of science and culture that leads to a sense of purpose, and an integrative approach designed to overcome the fragmentation that has led to a breakdown in cultural communication.

If we fail to redirect science and technology towards fundamental needs, the advances in informatics (hoarding of knowledge), biotechnology (patenting of life forms) and genetic engineering (mapping of the human genome) will lead to irreversible consequences detrimental to the future of human life.

We must recognize the reality of a multi-religious world and the need for the kind of tolerance that will enable religions, whatever their differences, to cooperate together. This would contribute to meeting the requirements for human survival and for the nurturing of the shared core values of human solidarity, human rights and human dignity. This is the common heritage of mankind that derives from our perception of the transcendental significance of human existence, and from a new global conscience.

Signatories to the Declaration

- 1-Professor Daniel Afedzi Akyeampong (Ghana), President, Mathematical Association of Ghana.
- 2-Professor Ubiratan d'Am brosio (Brazil), Professor of Mathematics and Pro-Rector for University.
- 3-Development of the State University of Campinas.
- 4-Professor Henry Stapp (United States of America), Physicist at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley.
- 5-Mr Pierre Dansereau (Canada), Ecologist, Emeritus.
- 6-Professor at University of Quebec (Montreal).
- 7-Professor Nicola Dallaporta (Italy), Emeritus Professor of International School for Advanced Studies in Trieste.
- 8-Dr Mahde Elmandjra (Morocco), Former Assistant Director-General of UNESCO, President of Futuribles International.
- 9-Dr Santiago Genoves (Mexico), Titular Research.
- 10-Professor of Anthropology, University of Mexico.
- 11-Professor Carl-Goran Heden (Sweden), President, World Academy of Arts and Science.
- 12-Dr Alexander King (United Kingdom), President of the Club of Rome.
- 13-Mrs Eleonora Barbieri Masini (Italy), President of the World Futures Studies.
- 14-Dr Digby McLaren (Canada), President of the Royal Society of Canada.
- 15-Professor Yujiro Nakamura (Japan), Philosopher, Author and Professor at Meiji University.
- 16-Mr Lisandro Otero (Cuba), Author.
- 17-Mr Michel Pandom (France), Writer-Publisher.
- 18-Professor Josef Rimán (Czechoslovakia), President of Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.
- 19-Professor Soediatmoko (Indonesia), Former Rector U.N University.

Critique and Evaluation

BY: M.T. Ja'fari

Was Man Destined to Worship the Triumvirate of Wealth, Power and Evil And Become So Entangled?

Were we to gather all the scientists from the past and present, from the East and the West, including those following any genre of doctrine and sets of beliefs, and to ask these men, 'Sirs, could not Man opt for any solution other than the worship of this triumvirate that has immersed the whole of history in blood, hypocrisy, betrayal of rights, and selfishness? Could not Man choose any other path but the one that has led to the instability of our planet, turning it into a heat engine?', what would their answer be?

Could not Man act on the basis of honesty and serenity? Could he not qualify his life so that effort and hard work could emerge as merits? Could he choose for himself what he chooses for others? Could he abstain from the things that he asks others to abstain from? Could he not avoid lies, double standards, and duplicity? Can ways for Man's rescue be improvised, or God forbid, must the Earth be left on its own so that the burnt cadavers of men fall prey to vultures, if indeed vultures were to survive?

If Man has failed to take up any of these paths towards sensible life, it is not surprising that this beautiful shelter, called Earth, has turned into an arsenal, a scene for the survival of the fittest, and a heat engine. Now, let us explore each sentence in the Vancouver Declaration so as to evaluate both Man's current situation on Earth and its underpinnings.

The Declaration states:

1- 'Our planet is unstable a constantly changing heat engine. Life appeared on its surface about four billion years ago, and developed in balance with an environment where sudden unpredictable change is the norm. The discovery, over 200 years ago, of free energy locked in fossil fuels has given mankind the power to dominate the whole planetary surface. In an unbelievably short span of time, unplanned and almost mindlessly, our species has become by far the largest factor for change on the planet. The consequences have been drastic and unique in the history of our species.'

I will succinctly address two issues relevant to the above statement. First, what must be emphasized with regard to the above sentences is that the conferees have come to the conclusion that the more Man progresses on planet Earth the more he retrogresses, in a suicidal fashion, in terms of the phenomenon of life, nearing the threshold of mass extinction. This is the very reason for the holding of the

Conference, which was entrusted with the task of improvisation for the sustenance of life in the 21st century.

Second, one ought to ask: Did Man not know that the precondition to critical change is correct planning? A negative answer would imply that Man is marching on the path of history without knowing where he is heading toward sensible life or suicide. If he understood that lack of planning entails harmful repercussions, why did he contradict his understanding?

There are no valid answers to this question. We can only assert that engaged in profiteering, hedonism, and selfishness, Man will commit anything even suicide!

2- 'Man's power of dominating nature has had drastic and unique consequences for the history of our species.'

Regarding the above statement, the question must be raised as to whether it was Man's domination of nature throughout history or his weakness in the face of profiteering, hedonism, and selfishness that has brought about such drastic and unique consequences. It is more or less obvious that the real reason for the emergence of such serious and destructive consequences at this juncture does not lie in Man's domination of nature, but, rather, in his inability to dominate and control himself. An analogy would be illustrative: Man's various physical organs and limbs are interconnected and commanded by a single brain. Should a single limb ache, then the other members of the body will be discomforted as well.

Did not this very Man who is convinced that his domination of nature has placed him on the verge of destruction understand that by dominating nature he has scored a success that will have to inevitably be shared with his like? While I am writing about these pains and their cures, I sense that the majority of the readers of these pages will think that this poor scribbler is living in a utopia and is penning these idealist notions. I deem it unnecessary to answer this group of people, for the holding of such a conference clearly affirms the imminence of Man's annihilation, and I, or people like myself, need not bother to respond to their criticism.

It is beyond question that in the context of the enjoyment of the earth's abundant resources, human intellect and innovation, and even other celestial planets, and considering the equality of men and the lofty notion of human unity, it would be impossible for some to remain deprived and for their deprivation not to adversely affect the fate of those who are immersed in affluence.

There is no doubt that men will not tolerate the eternal deprivation of the majority in the face of the selfish affluence of the few. Should a sense of indifference prevail, the very essence and momentum of life will undermine it.

As Willy Brandt has asserted: It is impossible for the strong to remain aloof *vis-a-vis* both the fate of the weak and the degradation of human identity, and yet to be able to attain their aspirations.

3- 'An accelerating destruction of the habitat of life, initiating a massive and irreversible episode of mass extinction in the biosphere the basis of the Earth's ecosystem.'

Do you know who would regret the proclamation of Man's annihilation? Those who enjoy the great gift of life, not the ones who seek to codify natural life, disregarding the necessity and splendor of life itself. The following meaningful short story bears this point out:

In 1949, Einstein recounted his meeting with a high-ranking American official thus: 'Lately, I was conversing with a very intelligent American figure, who seemed to be a nice person. I warned him about the serious threat of war to humanity and emphasized that should a war break out, the human species will be probably annihilated and only a supranational organization can prevent this. But I was amazed at my interlocutor's response. He replied: What makes you oppose the annihilation of human species?'

Were we to look into Einstein's comments about his interlocutor's response, we would find out that such a surprising answer was primarily spurred by the decadence of the quality of human life and Man's distorted mentality, which in turn, is a result of his exploitation and misuse of the gifts that God has bestowed on humankind, the Children of Adam (peace be upon him).

It is the innate weakness of Man that has taken joy away from the various aspects of his life. Man is thus living according to the imperative of natural life or on the basis of a carefree attitude while calling it 'freedom'.

Einstein goes on to say: 'Such a clear and cutting response reveals an internal pain and affliction, which is the by-product of the contemporary world. I am convinced that this answer comes from a person who has done his best to strike a balance within himself but has even lost the scantest hope of doing so; this answer is the revelation of a painful forlornness besetting the totality of mankind.'

Throughout history all divine prophets have underscored that profiteering and hedonism must be subject to an evolutionary command over the self and instincts and that they should not be allowed to proceed on the basis of absolute wish and desire, for that would totally undermine existing human laws. Were the divine prophets joking when they asserted: 'Do not wish for others what you do not wish for yourself?' Were they merely musing or expressing truths on behalf of the Lord of men? Indubitably, the divine prophets conveyed the sincerest of truths from God to all of us. At the current juncture, there is no option left for the sustaining of an optimal life in the beautiful habitat of nature but through avoidance of selfishness, which essentially encompasses such qualities as absolute and boundless profiteering and hedonism. There is no option left but to realize the divine motive of life.

4- 'An unimaginable expenditure of resources and human ingenuity on war and preparation for war.'

It so seems that myopia *vis-a-vis* the future has become a tradition for those who do not cherish any aspiration in this world except for 'seizing the moment' for the

1. Philip Frank, *A Biography of Albert Einstein*.

2. Ibid.

sake of pleasure.

Unfortunately, myopia *vis-a-vis* one's life and the lives of future generations is inculcated heedlessly and through false sagacity by naive minds. Sa'adi, the great Iranian poet, objected to this decadent tradition thus:

نیندیشد ز روز تنگدستی حریف سفله در پایان مستی
سفله ای کاو روز روشن شمع کافوری نهد زود بینی کش به شب روغن ندارد در چراغ

*The drunken ignoble does not improvise
For the day when he will be indigent
The ignoble, who lets the candle burn day and night
Will run out of light in the dark of night.*

Ignoble people have devastated the earth to consolidate their control over the weak. They have harnessed control over available means and natural resources and claim to be 'civilized'! They have attempted to register their names among the heroes of human history. They have misused the bulk of invaluable resources and human ingenuity for the sake of the invention and manufacture of lethal weapons or for the production of temporary and virulent means of pleasure. For more elaboration on this 'killing power', refer to Willy Brandt's book titled *Armed Man and Famished Man*, in which authoritative and exact statistics are provided on the issue we have raised.

Do not be misled into thinking that the ones who are wasting the Earth's abundant resources view themselves as culpable.

Instead, they claim to be spearheading civilization, and are convinced that they have turned the 'copper' of humanity into 'gold'! They are so conceited and megalomaniac as to ignore the cry of those who have a premonition of man's doomed future.

5- 'And all licensed by a belief in inexhaustible resources of the planet, encouraged by political and economic systems that emphasize short term profit as a benefit, and disregard the real cost of production'.

This is a truth that is nowadays echoed in those very countries that licensed unconditional possession of everything under the banner of 'efforts aimed at progress'. Indeed, the peoples of the 19th and early 20th centuries considered all the efforts of the innovators, thinkers, politicians and economists as contributions to civilization and progress. Anyone opposing this trend, who would say, 'Sirs, awaken, be aware of the future!' would be inevitably faced with the answer: 'Go, mind your business and do not obstruct the path of humanity. The age in which neglect overshadowed humanity has clearly elapsed and currently the only means for expression resides in the scientific language!'

Those who were aware, in turn, swore by the conscience of humanity, by the truth and validity of purposeful science that was aimed at educating valiant men and promoting real civilization: 'Do not deceive us with empty words, for we have found out since time immemorial that:

The way is paved but traps lie beneath it Meaning is lost amongst words

Words are but traps

Empty words poison the spring of our lives.

In the above sentences, a significant issue is pointed out regarding 'political and economic systems emphasize short-term profit as benefit'. The fact that policy makers concentrate on short-term interest should strike no one by surprise. What, instead, is surprising is that universities and academic quarters offer their views to naive students as being scientifically sound so much so that should a foresighted opinion-maker (whether an academician or someone else) exclaim: 'Honorable professors and scientists, stay vigilant, for this planet's resources cannot meet your eternal, selfish and hedonistic requirements', the answer would, in all probability, be: 'You and your kind are too ignorant to understand these issues.'

6- 'The situation facing mankind involves the collapse of any balance between our species and the rest of life on the planet. Paradoxically, at the time when we stand at the threshold of degeneration of the ecosystem and degradation of the human quality of life, knowledge and science are now in a position to provide both the human creativity and the technology needed to take remedial action and to rediscover the harmony between nature and mankind. Only the social and political will is lacking.'

The above statement provides the most accurate judgment on the current unpleasant condition confronting humanity. It has not only rendered those sociological, psychological, and 'civilized' notions that emerged as rationalizations for this critical situation questionable but has also proved that in the contemporary era a host of social science issues have been wrongly presented as 'science' and 'knowledge', thus effectively deceiving naive individuals.

At any rate, after all the misfortunes and deviations in human society caused in the name of science, the time has come for them to admit their mistake. This can be clearly observed in these statements. Here these opinionated individuals assert: 'Only the social and political will is lacking.' The contemporary politicians and policy makers are not likely to easily subscribe to the views expressed by the drafters of the Declaration. They are prone to argue: 'To govern and administer our societies and policies we draw upon the most solid and the strongest will. Otherwise, in the absence of such will, nothing could be effectively achieved. And, as can be seen, we are achieving our goals and carrying out our tasks effectively.'

They are not only convinced of their achievements of their societies, but also consider themselves to be spearheading 'civilization'! What needs to be pondered on is the motivation behind the will to administer societies and implement policies. In other words, the real issue resides in the laws and motivation underlying these socio-political activities. It is more or less obvious that the main motivation for contemporary statesmen and politicians stems from profiteering and hedonism that reflect the destructive tradition of the powerful, who consider themselves as the end and others as mere means. As long as the currents of thought and motivation spring from profiteering and hedonism, not only will such conferences not achieve their intended objectives, but they will also spur the profiteers, hedonists, and egoists to

embark on confronting whatever positive results such conferences might yield. We, however, hope that such a thing will not occur.

7- 'The origin of our present predicament lies fundamentally in certain developments in science that were essentially complete by the beginning of the century. Those developments, which are mathematically codified in a classical mechanical picture of the universe, gave to human beings a power over nature that has, until recently, produced an ever increasing, and seemingly boundless, supply of material commodities. The impoverishment of the conception of Man caused by this omission of other human dimensions is precisely in line with the scientific conception of the universe as a machine.'

Certain issues raised in the above statement must be taken into consideration.

a. Basically, the origin of our unpleasant situation lies in scientific breakthroughs in certain areas. But, it seems that the attribution of the problems of our time and of previous eras solely to science would be improper. For, science, as has been proved, provides light and, as such, can not damage humanity and bring about affliction. What causes affliction is, instead, the unforgivable faults of, and wrong steps taken by, statesmen and those in charge of education, who undertake the moral and psychological training of the populace without due regard to the real issues.

In other words, it is not science that gives way to individual and social imbalances but the untamed ego that does not recognize any principle but one: that one is the end, and that others are mere means.

b. 'Swept up in the exploitation of this power, humankind has tended to shift its values to those promoting the maximal realization of the material possibilities that this new power provides. Suppressed, correspondingly, were the values associated with dimensions of the human potential.'

This statement is logical and sheds light on the very current that has born bitter fruits for humanity. In the era when industry was born from science and became highly diversified, even those who should have prevented excessive materialist and hedonistic tendencies and paved the way for an eventual equilibrium between matter and meaning or spirituality followed the materialists and propagated the latter's views, arguing that the emergence of the current situation in human history was the necessary and inevitable outcome of social laws, which would simply have to accept.

c. Was it really necessary to confine values to materialism and to eliminate and discount anything that fell outside of its realm, even the lives of the peoples living on Earth?

d. We have to bear in mind that materialism and profiteering not only destroyed past cultures but also did not provide even the slightest opportunity to the people, thinkers, and opinion makers to comprehend the culture and knowledge that could best offer a philosophical vista and goal for men. Scholars must consider the following as a principle: Those who are mesmerized by profiteering,

hedonism and egoism will necessarily consider culture, spiritualism, morality, religion and even humanity all of which are the constructive elements in man—as a mirage and phantasm. This is well brought out in a tale that Aristotle once narrated about power and its manifestations:

‘A rabbit was once conversing with a lion on the subject of justice. The rabbit gave to the lion the soundest explanation on the nature of justice, and then asked him: “How does His Highness evaluate my remarks on justice?” Pausing for a while, the lion confidently responded: ‘Dear friend, your remarks on justice were indeed valuable. The only thing lacking was that you did not mention my powerful teeth and claws and the way in which I ought to use them. Otherwise your observations were quite interesting!’

8- ‘The impoverishment of the conception of Man caused by this omission of other human dimensions is precisely in line with the “scientific” conception of the universe as a machine, and of man as nothing but a cog within it.’

Concerning the phrase ‘omission of other human dimensions is precisely in line with the “scientific” conception of the universe’, one has to consider whether this condition is to be attributed to the essence of science or if science is rationalized by this condition. Obviously, as mentioned before, science is ‘light’, and, given the essence of light, it cannot veil the various dimensions of Man and the universe. For, science cannot negate reality. It is Man who can confront reality and squarely lie about it. He can be led by his diabolic instincts to exclude the human dimension from his scientific vision, thus rebelling against humanity.

9. ‘Man’s conception of himself is a principal determinant of his values; it fixes the conception of “self” in the appraisal of self-interest. Thus, the ideological impoverishment associated with the view of Man as a cog in a machine leads to the narrowing of values.’

As regards this issue, one needs to point out that the impoverishment of lofty human values is not derived from Man’s misconception of himself. For, in recent periods human sciences (though lagging behind applied sciences and technology) have witnessed relative progress, but not to the expected level. Nonetheless, this very level of progress can thoroughly establish human values, so that Man will be willing to accept and abide by them. On the other hand, does not our established knowledge about Man and his values and dimensions, developed in the course of many centuries, suffice to prove and assist in the appraisal of human values—the knowledge that exists in the treasury of great libraries or small ones, in any town?

Undoubtedly, it would be sufficient for us to meticulously ponder on and search for a constructive and moral outlook, appraise it in accordance with our natural and ‘sensible’ life, and use it as a cornerstone for building the monument of humanity. Although the completion of this monument might require extensive knowledge, we could well attain such a level of erudition in our contemporary age. The principle ‘the human personality must be educated so that respect for the right, life and personality of other men can be attained’ can be found in the most ‘primitive’ of books, even in the remotest corners of ‘uncivilized’ countries.

This also applies to a host of other principles ingrained in the pure nature of Man that are waiting to be activated. In this context, we can hardly maintain that the imperative of history has led us to live in an age of ideological impoverishment. For, as mentioned before, men can still gain access to that level of ideology and awareness that can convince them of the transcendence of values. Lofty human values can easily be revived and learned through such means as mass media, i.e. radio, television, newspapers, various instruments of publicity and artistic catalysts, such as movies, plays, etc. This human movement and revolution directed at the revitalization of values must unfold with utmost care. It has the capability of elevating the human status from being merely 'a cog in a lifeless machine' to one of sublime understanding and comprehension, based on which Man can actively participate in the shaping of his destiny, thus taking the path towards 'sensible' life.

10. 'However, scientific advances of the present century have shown this mechanical view of the universe to be untenable on purely scientific grounds. Thus, the rational basis for the mechanical conception of Man has been invalidated'.

We must assert that the mechanistic knowledge of Man, which has turned him into a 'cog', has never had a rational, historical basis for it to lose its value now. In the course of centuries since the inception of Man's history of knowledge, even prior to the development of formal scientific and philosophical visions, Man had a clear conception of his spiritual and psychological condition and displayed an awareness of his motivations other than materialism, and a sense of self-consciousness, freedom, will, and responsibility. Unfortunately, Man is usually prone to forget these essential issues when thoroughly immersed in materialism.

Under these circumstances, it so seems that more important issues are overshadowed. Efforts aiming at doing away with imprisonment and entrapment besetting most people did not start yesterday or today and will not begin tomorrow. Hence, it would be more suitable to replace the statement 'Thus, the rational basis for the mechanical conception of man has been invalidated' with the following sentence: 'Today, Man has come to understand once more that the rationalization for his mechanistic conception has been imposed on humanity by profiteers and expansionists. Unfortunately, thinkers were deviated alike. This has been but a misperception and distortion which is not attributable to reality.'

11. 'Human values become, accordingly, in this new scientific view, enlarged into values consonant with those prevalent in earlier cultures. It is within the framework of the converging images of Man provided by recent scientific and cultural developments that we look for visions of a future that would allow Man to survive in dignity and harmony with his environment.'

The drafters of the Vancouver Declaration should reword the assertion about values 'consonant with those prevalent in earlier culture' with the phrase 'consonant with the natural and spiritual values of men', for such terms as 'earlier', 'past', 'ancient', 'old' or 'past centuries' convey a sense of erosion and obliteration. Such a sense would not be congenial to Man's drive for novelty and originality, which is the most basic human urge. To devalue an issue it would be enough for

one to refer to it as 'old' or 'outdated'! On the other hand, human laws and natural phenomena associated with men never age. Every newborn child brings with himself or herself novel potentials and capabilities, unaffected by the passage of millions of years. In other words, the novelty of potentials in an infant differs considerably from that of his or her ancestors or from people born years ahead of him or her. The same rule applies to his or her mental ability, imagination, will power, curiosity, conscience and the activities he or she can undertake. This also applies to his or her intuition, adaptation to and absorption of training and education, readiness to comprehend the luster of heavenly revelations, submission to lofty human attributes, adoption of a transcendental behavior, etc..

These human realities and spiritual dimensions are born with every individual, regardless of the passage of millions of years on Earth. Therefore, it is not necessary to retrogress in time in order to rectify men and transform them from the status of 'cogs' within a machine into free responsible beings, transcending materialistic tendencies.

All the same, we do not need to seek the help of past human cultures and legacies. It would be unwise to succumb to assertions such as the one conveyed to me by one of Heidegger's students. This student quoted his tutor as saying, 'We have to go back and re-evaluate those lofty human principles of 200 years ago which we neglected then.' As previously asserted, constructive spiritual and pure human dimensions are generated upon man's birth. To prove the point, one can adopt two perspectives. First, psychologically speaking, any mentally-sound individual harbors the seeds of transcendental spiritual norms that come to the fore upon close scrutiny. Though time must be spent to dust off the thick residues of his mechanical aspects, the seeds of humanity that are sown will eventually germinate. Second, a sound and unbiased analysis of the widespread urge for nihilism and suicide (which, ironically, is more prevalent in affluent and thriving countries) would clearly reveal that one of the underlying causes of such problems and mental disorders is rooted in Man's neglecting religion and spirituality.

Should we assume that the rectification of men's spirits calls for superimposing the past and ancient cultures onto the present era, this would imply that in the contemporary world the seeds of transcendental spiritual values are desiccated. This view is fully substantiated by the above perspectives and the Declaration's previous statements.

12. 'The 'self' becomes thereby converted from a deterministically controlled cog in a giant machine to an aspect of a free creative impulse that is intrinsically and immediately tied to the universe as a whole.'

The above statement attests to a number of points indicating the incessant rejuvenation of human spirituality.

1. The older, rigid mechanical picture of the universe is replaced by concepts that permit a universe that is formed by a continuous creative input that is not rigidly constrained by any mechanical law.

2. Man himself becomes an aspect of this creative impulse, and is linked to the whole universe in an integral way that is not expressible within the older mechanistic frame work.
3. The 'self' thereby changes from a deterministically controlled cog in a giant machine to an aspect or a free creative impulse that is intrinsically and immediately tied to the universe as a whole.

Our difference with the drafters of the Declaration resides in the fact that the latter view the incessant rejuvenation in human existence as a new and emerging phenomenon. They maintain that such a state is a recent consequence of Man being annoyed at being a cog in a giant machine, whereas, in our view, the aforementioned phenomenon is by no means new. It is, rather, an integral and basic human characteristic which blossoms commensurate with a free creative impulse devoid of the mark left by history's past cultures.

13. 'The human species has reached limits in its use of the external world and also limits in its capacity to live in a changing social and cultural environment. Man's developing perceptions in science suggest that he might recapture past beliefs and varieties of spiritual existence. The present critical situation in mankind's occupancy of the planet requires new visions, rooted in a variety of cultures, in contemplating the future.'

With regard to the above statement we must pay particular attention to a number of critical issues. First, it would be more proper to reframe the first sentence as follows: 'Those who value power and harness the necessary expertise for tapping the Earth's natural resources have reached limits in their use of the external world...'

Second, the sentence should be re-evaluated. For, if humanity had indeed perceived such a critical notion, in other words had it truly understood that it had reached 'its limits in its capacity to live in a changing social and cultural environment', then it would not be deprived of spirituality, morality, and lofty human tenets, and hence would not emerge as a mechanical cog in a gigantic social machine. On the other hand, the abovementioned sentence contradicts the contents of the Declaration's 6th paragraph that maintains that 'only the social and political will is lacking.'

Third, it must be asked, is the truth of Man being able to recover his forgone faith and spirituality derived from his 'developing perceptions in science' or from the fact that so-called modern science (not in its original sense, according to which the spiritual cultures of men become concertedly dynamic so as to both uplift men and rescue science from the superficial levels of existence) that explores Man and his aspirations at a deadlock?¹ This deadlock has brought together a number of prominent pundits—such as the drafters of the Vancouver Declaration—to warn men not to delay, for the very perception of science, which seemingly brought

1. This statement has been brought to the fore in one of the authoritative books on the history of science: Pierre Rousseau, *Science Is Declared Bankrupt*.

I will elaborate on this point in subsequent discussions.

about the knowledge of, and tamed, all existing natural phenomena, has now turned against humanity itself, threatening its very existence.

The deadlock confronting human and natural sciences calls the attention of pundits to the fact that, in addition to his physical dimensions, Man embodies extremely important spiritual or value dimensions, ignoring which will invariably endanger his existence on planet Earth. Scientists must reconsider their definition of science so as to prevent their own destruction, as numerous scholars have asserted in notable books, such as Alexis Karl, in his *Man: The Unknown Being*, Willy Brandt, in *Armed Man and Famished Man*, and Conrad Lorentz, in his *Eight Great Sins of Human Civilization*

14. 'Recognition that a human being is an aspect of the reactive process that gives form to the universe enlarges Man's image of himself and allows him to transcend the egoism that is the principal cause of disharmony among his fellows and between mankind and nature.'

This statement, in my view, sheds light on certain critical variables contributing to Man's approaching the abyss of annihilation. One of the most important of these variables referred to in the statement is 'egoism', which is a widely denounced characteristic. All psychological, moral, and religious sources, and, in general, all works constructively dealing with Man and humanity have referred to egoism as a destructive illness. Philosophers, scientists and other pundits probing into human affairs have attempted to explore the variations, essence, and repercussions of this cataclysmic disease. Nonetheless, given the dearth of adequate training and education historically, this ravaging and yet seemingly satisfying disorder took a contagious form and not too many individuals were fortunate enough to find its cure.

One can easily challenge me and ask, now that I have diagnosed this disease and its contagion throughout history, what I could suggest about how humankind could be saved from its deadly claws. The answer to this question seems fairly simple. We have to note the reality that, upon birth, the nature of Man is pure and serene, hence open to superior education. It would be invalid to maintain that Man's destiny is a prior phenomenon; for if such an assertion were true, then Man would have been destroyed during his early existence on planet Earth itself.

None of the facets of human existence can fully develop without an adequate and well-rounded education and training. It is more or less obvious that conventional education is aimed at the worldly aspects of human life, excluding the enigmatic phenomena deeply engrained in men. All of us concede that such phenomena indeed exist in all men. Nonetheless, they are not activated as determinant stimuli in men's lives. The great impact of education and the flexibility of Man in face of both environmental change and the emergence of new conditions attest to this fact.

Now that the incessant rejuvenation of human existence has become an established fact for pundits, who rely on a wealth of experimental and scientific evidence, it would be senseless to maintain that Man is so entangled in the chains of egoism, hedonism, and self-interest that no way for his rescue can be fathomed. Given the above reasoning, the only task that remains to be accomplished is the

enhancement of education in such a way that egoism and selfishness can be channeled according to the law of 'command of an evolutionary self'.

In other words, we have to convince Man that to attain 'sensible life' he can transform his 'natural self'—which is essentially selfish and seeks aggrandizement—into a 'transcendental self'. There are no solutions to these calamities and afflictions except for this cure. It behooves all of us to move forth on this path in unison, and fight unrelentingly against the deadly disease of egoism.

You might maintain that in many countries in the West and some countries in the East egoism has been regulated and acts of aggression have been uprooted and that to regulate the above impulses, these countries did not resort to research in such fields as morality or the implementation of moral codes at a social level. To respond to this, I would argue that to cut the branches of a poisonous plant is not the same as uprooting it. The roots of that poisonous plant might be even strengthened once the branches are chopped off. The killing of anopheles mosquitoes will not uproot malaria as a disease. Instead, the swamp that nurtures malarial mosquitoes must be destroyed. This fact is so obvious that no additional elaboration is needed. Hence, if in some countries the 'selves' are seemingly tamed, this should not elude one into believing that the vast quagmire of egoism has been destroyed. The sharp edges of legal restrictions and regulations and the mechanistic order have temporarily checked the symptoms of egoism, but the tumor still remains. Time will tell whether this superficial control of egoism has been brought about by the treatment of the tumor based on the 'command of an evolutionary self' or by compulsory or semi-compulsory social regulations. Some veterans of World War II have told me that when they were being defeated they would egoistically infringe upon each other's rights more often than the enemy did. If the individuals whose egoism is tamed by the compulsion of a mechanical life were to be transferred to a totally different environment, where the indigenous people pursue their self-interest without the slightest restriction, the newcomers would, in all probability, adopt the local behavior, though at first the absence of regulations and penalties might be discomfiting to them. The above argument reinforces the fact that the compulsion of contractual laws and fear of penalties will not contain and destroy egoism categorically. Hence, the compulsory regulation of egoism for bringing order to social life is not the same as 'the command of an evolutionary self', which is a concept supported by divine religions and morality.

15. 'The overcoming of fragmentation of the body-mind-spirit unity, brought about by unbalanced emphasis on any one over the others, allowed Man to discover within himself the reflection of cosmos and its supreme unifying principle.'

It must be said that the fragmentation of the above elements (body-mind-spirit) can be brought about in two ways. Fragmentation can be spurred by the fact that these elements are inherently and essentially different. It can also emerge in the form of a contradiction that impairs the total unity of these elements. The fragmentation of this unity is contrary to the logic of both Man and existence and cannot be induced by these elements' essential differences. It must be noted that, from the scientific and philosophical perspectives, matter has a certain essence and

characteristics that cannot crystallize in mental activities, which naturally transcend physical quantities and qualities. For instance, the abstraction of a given number is a mental activity that cannot take place in a physical entity which cannot crystallize as 'it really is' in imagination, perception, decision, understanding or in other mental realms. This also applies to Man's spirit, with its specific characteristics that cannot be adapted to mental activities or to the physical world. Man's spirit seeks bliss, harnessing a sense of responsibility beyond such compulsory natural impulses as profiteering and hedonism. Man's spirit activates his conscience as a mariner's sensitive compass in the ocean of existence. It is indeed man's spirit that rules for the victory of moral tenets. It is obvious that such qualities do not prevail in case of other human elements, such as the mind.

Hence, the fragmentation of the mind—body—spirit unity severely undermines the notion of 'sensible life', specially should the contradiction among these elements reach its zenith. This is a great mistake that has been committed by some in the course of history. We must avail ourselves of every available means to prove the invalidity of this perception.

An argument that is deemed useful here is that were these triumvirate of elements to be contradictory and fully fragmented they could not have possibly guided and directed human existence with such a great level of concert and unison. The body, with all of its characteristics and laws, subjects itself to the rule of the mind, while the latter places itself under the transcendental command of the spirit.

All these elements take an active part in the evolution of the 'human self', hence emerging as a multidimensional, and yet single, reality. In the final analysis, human sciences, on the one hand, and sensible education, on the other, must come together in a quintessential accord so as to pave the way for an ultimate unison of these elements and aim at the fruition of their activities. Just as education ought to envisage the elimination of artificial notions, such as the notion that matter is all-prevailing, mankind must be convinced of the fact that the spirit cannot continue to exist without the body and the cosmos and vice versa. In other words, the elimination of spirit and spirituality will be as harmful to existence and human sciences as the elimination of matter and materialism.

16. 'Such visions change the conception of Man in nature and call for a radical transformation of models of developments; the elimination of poverty; ignorance and misery; the end of the arms race; introduction of a new learning process, educational system and mental attitudes; implementation of better forms of redistribution to ensure social equity; a new design for living, based on a reduction of waste; respect for bio-diversity, socio-economic diversity, and cultural diversity that transcend outmoded concepts of sovereignty.'

It seems that one of the greatest issues confronting the contemporary world relates to 'power'. This notion has attracted a great deal of attention. As such, it does not seem likely that as long as Man considers power to be the epicenter of all phenomena (in his eyes, power enshrines beauty, responsibility, good, justice, law, culture, and the struggle for survival; he dreams about power and evaluates all values based on power) he would be able to uproot real ignorance, pervasive poverty and the arms race, devise viable ways for the improvement of educational

systems and improvise for more convenient distribution facilities so as to enhance social equity.

17. 'Science and technology are indispensable for the attainment of these goals, but they can succeed only through an integration of science and culture that leads to a sense of purpose, and an integrative approach designed to overcome the fragmentation that has led to a breakdown in cultural communication. If we fail to redirect science and technology towards fundamental needs, the advances in informatics (hoarding of knowledge), biotechnology (patenting of life forms) and genetic engineering (mapping of the human genome) will lead to irreversible consequences detrimental to the future of human life.'

Since time immemorial, this loud cry has reverberated throughout human societies: 'Science and technology can bring about the optimal human life at the individual and social levels, on the condition that science and culture go hand in hand to bring about a thorough comprehension of this goal while developing a common approach to overcome the cultural incongruities that have undermined intra-cultural communication.'

This assertion was brought to the fore in academic textbooks and authoritative researches based on sound arguments. It is far from an unfamiliar and recent assertion brought to the attention of men of knowledge. Nonetheless, the insightful challenge that the dilemma presents is to find the means for conveying this meaningful message to the egoists, profiteers and hedonists and for them to comprehend its nuances so as to put away such destructive convictions as 'our will, and our interests.' As such, these people could relegate the 15 human 'unions' that I have referred to in my research on 'Human rights in Western and Eastern perspectives' to oblivion.

We have all heard this ominous cry: 'The future of humanity will be at the mercy of machines and senseless computers.' Can any sensible person really rationalize this ominous cry? The real issue does not reside in the question of whether giant machines and computers will dominate our lives. The issue is whether Man can overcome the weakness caused by his inability to control his innovations so as not to become enslaved by them. Given men's numerous and outstanding potentials and the fact that they can easily harness control over millions and even billions of free beings—other men—how could they not tame machines and computers? Indeed, the only difficult and exacting task for Man is to evade egoism, profiteering, and hedonism. Though these impulses might have betrayed him, they certainly cannot overcome his innovative iron will. Given this God given will, Man has been able to confront obstacles put on the path of history, getting to where he is now. This strong and invincible creature has penetrated the depths of all existing material and imaginary obstacles, reaching the abyss of oceans and the crest of celestial planets. At the current juncture, issues raised in certain powerful societies attest to the fact that Man, who is melancholic in face of a mechanical life and other imposing natural and social phenomena, can well restore the very bridges he had destroyed during his historical journey. He can at least confess: 'I have made a mistake in destroying the bridges that could have emerged as the solid pillars of "sensible human life". Now, I see that the genuine laws of life cannot be

overshadowed by the trivialities of profiteering and hedonism.' It appears that the emergence of such a perception would emerge as a prelude for the compensation of Man's past and future mistakes.

18. 'Time is short - every delay in establishing world eco - cultural peace will only increase the cost of survival. We must recognize the reality of a multi-religious world and the need for the kind of tolerance that will enable religions, whatever their differences, to cooperate together. This would contribute to meeting the requirements for human survival and for the nurturing of the shared core values of human rights and human dignity. This is the common heritage of mankind that derives from our perception of the transcendental significance of human existence and from a new global conscience.'

We must note the important fact that the repercussions of egoism and profiteering are not particular to our age. In other words, these afflictions and misfortunes did not first emerge during the contemporary period. Rather, this adverse heritage has haunted Man throughout history. Nonetheless, in our era the repercussions of egoism and selfishness will be much more imposing and unredeemable, including, possibly, even the destruction of living nature and eventually the destruction of planet Earth itself. I recall raising this issue with a caring and sensitive individual who had spent his life defending human rights. Alluding to the decadence of human identity and lofty principles, he said, 'The earth has turned into an arsenal and a nihilistic pleasure house, defying human grandeur; so let it be destroyed.' This was strikingly similar to the statement of Einstein's interlocutor, who demurred, 'Why are you so concerned about Man's annihilation?' Einstein had retorted, 'This man's statement was not inhumane or pessimistic. It was derived from the fact that human life has lost its true identity, allowing lofty human values to become empty shells and words.'¹

The Declaration states that 'Time is short.' But, we have to admit that in the saving of nature and human lives time has always been short. Hence, the principle 'time is short' should be recognized by men as having operated in all phases of history. It may occur to some that since time has been running short for the rescue of human life all along, why underscore it now? The answer is that, this time, the misfortune besetting men's lives on planet Earth is not restricted to the weak, but the strong, the affluent, the oppressed, the have-nots, the rulers and the ruled are equally involved and threatened. The calls and cries, seminars, and symposia, congresses, books, and other efforts related to the issue attest to the dismal condition of all social ranks as far as the struggle for survival is concerned.

A sentence in the Declaration says, 'Every delay in establishing world eco-cultural peace will only increase the cost of survival'. With regard to this, it must be maintained that if in the past the authenticity of human identity had been valued and the constructive cries of philanthropists had been paid attention to by the egoists, the cost of survival would not reach such a scale and degree. Nonetheless, we hope that, this time, the cries of human survival, inciting the urge for 'sensible life' and respect for rights will be complemented by concrete and serious

1. Phillip Frank, op. cit

improvisation and efforts, although some might be convinced that this is a lingering illusion and that the prospects of profiteers and power-worshippers ever changing their hearts are remote.

The Declaration states, 'We must recognize the reality of a multi-religious world and the need for the kind of tolerance that will enable religions, whatever their differences, to cooperate together.' This is an outstanding suggestion about greater solidarity among men. But were we to assume that the existing religions (notwithstanding their commonalities) diverge at some critical points, then what would the solution be? Can any religion be considered as superior or can it be maintained that all religious differences should be put aside and their commonalities be both respected and implemented? How can these common denominators be attained?

We are not aware of the extent to which such Declarations will impact on human societies, especially the thriving ones. Nonetheless, we are convinced of the fact that should these Declarations make an impact, human history will undoubtedly take an immense leap forward.