

BIOPOLICY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

A PATHWAY TO A STABLE ECONOMY AND SECURITY

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Summary

Escalating economic and environmental instability worldwide is making it clear that we need governance with a vision. Effective leaders can spur progress by creating the context for change. Ensuring our planet's health and security is our fundamental responsibility to future generations. To rise to this global challenge, decision-makers need to avoid the mistakes of the past and to find inspiration in life-supporting development models. Our response to the global financial crisis should also make us mobilise our efforts to tackle growing environmental problems.

The economy must become an instrument to protect bios – life, the most precious gift on our planet. This requires new ethics and new economic policy – biopolitics – to help implement worldwide action for environmental sustainability and security. For the past 25 years, the Biopolitics International Organisation (B.I.O.) promotes these new development paradigms by infusing environmental thinking in every human endeavour.

In the effort to promote responsible policies that benefit the economy and the environment, the Vienna Economic Forum can serve as a platform to promote ideals for economic cooperation and an opportunity to expand our vision and build a new society of hope.

Defence for life – a new structure for the economy

The global economy and the global environment have headed into recession. Unavailability of credit, loss of jobs and income, climate change, energy insecurity, pollution of the air, water and soil, and the loss of species and habitats, are creating an unprecedented world challenge and responsibility. A coordinated response to this challenge could build a vibrant new economy based on clean energy, the protection of the environment and decent jobs for all. The task is both enormous and urgent.

To address this task on a global scale, the Biopolitics International Organisation (B.I.O.) promotes a new structure for society to ensure the continuity and appreciation of “bios,” all life on our planet. This requires new educational and economic paradigms, new legislation for environmental protection, and new defence strategies to eliminate environmental threats and preserve life and prosperity.

When B.I.O. was launched in 1985, it was already clear that a crisis in values, manifested by arrogance, environmental deterioration and over-consumerism, was leading humanity to an impasse. Twenty-five years later, and with growing threats to the global economy and the environment jeopardising our future, it is obvious that a new societal structure is imperative. This structure needs to be rooted in time-spanning ideals and to draw inspiration from a sound value system based on the preservation and protection of life.

As stated in B.I.O.'s founding document, human history can be traced back to a few thousand years only. During this period, several political models have been developed and implemented with varying degrees of success. The current crisis threatening global well-being, represents, in large, the failure of such models. The history of life, however, extends over hundreds of millions of years. Life has been tested in unlimited varieties and the most viable species have survived through the powerful selection of evolution. It is for this reason that bios can become the model for attaining the desired dimensions and expanding strategies for future society.

The spreading environmental and economic crises have to be approached as a dual challenge and opportunity for restructuring our economies, curbing unemployment, eradicating poverty, protecting biodiversity, and promoting clean energy, education, international cooperation and intercultural dialogue. The interdependence of interests is obvious. We need to forget the paradigms of the past where the neighbour was considered a dangerous “other” and where differences in culture or religion were a source of alienation and power games. We need to give priority to a new dimension of profit; not profit in terms of money only, but also in terms of values and of ways of rebuilding society.

Small additions to past patterns are no longer sufficient. Economic growth with concern for goods and income only is not viable. By encouraging over-consumerism, we are running towards a cliff. It is time for health, education, natural capital, water, food, biodiversity, culture, intellectual sharing, productivity, peace and security to be quantified and to assume their rightful place in a *three-dimensional* approach to economic growth. If we take into account the cost of environmental catastrophes such as floods and earthquakes, as well as increased migration due to environmental deterioration, the integration of environmental issues into investment decisions is more urgent than ever.

Bio-Environment	
Quality of Life	• Health - Safety - Justice - Happiness - Co-existence with all forms of life. External and Internal Wealth - Micro-Environment - Macro-Environment
Ethical Values	• Diachronic Values for Society - New Criteria for Business Compatible with Quality of Life
Legislation	• National - Global - Bios Rights - Bio-Diversity - Global Warming - Ozone Depletion - Overpopulation - Poverty - Derivation
Macro and Micro-Economics	• Time and Space Scale - Historical Perspective - Millennium Approach - Cleaner Production
Bio-Diplomacy	• Interdependence - International Cooperation - Third World Viewed as Partner
International Commerce	• Durable Development - Internalizing External Costs - Consumer Protection
Governance	• New Models of Participatory Democracy - World Referendum - Defense for Bios
Education	• Biocentric Curriculum in Economics - Satellites in Education
Media and Communications	• Internet Communication Feedback - Satellite Diffusion of Information - Marketing
Energy	• Protection of Resources - Study of Bios Models
Employment	• New Opportunities for Employment in Bio-Environmental Protection - Green Salary for Unemployed
Culture	• Arts, Cultural Values, Traditions

We cannot discard the old system within a day, but we can make big steps by introducing a new scale for evaluating “quality of life” and for encouraging an economy where the harmony and beauty of life are truly respected and appreciated.

Green salaries

The mitigation of environmental degradation is an overwhelming global responsibility, but it has also created new opportunities for employment and economic growth by spurring the need for innovation and skills. Environmental improvement jobs have benefitted many economies by providing the work force and their families with money to spend, which is then recycled through the economy. The environmental projects established may require equipment and materials, which must be purchased and create opportunities for new markets to develop. The eventual improvement to the environment is itself an economic benefit, allowing for productive use of the restored environment for resource management, wildlife habitat, parkland or tourism.

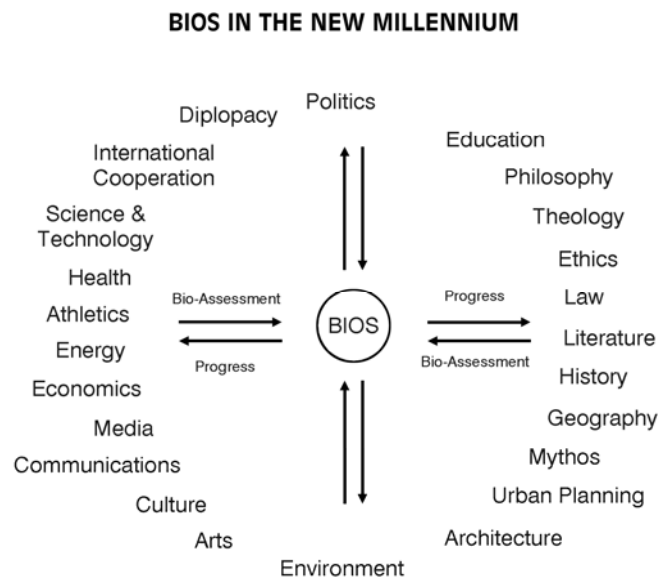
The problems of environmental degradation and unemployment may appear, at first glance, to be unrelated. However, numerous opportunities exist for linking the two through the concept of “green salaries,” a proposal put forward by B.I.O. in order to promote employment that also improves the environment and curtails climate change, pollution, loss

of biodiversity and resource depletion. The Green Salary can also help to elicit a positive feeling among the unemployed, in addition to providing new opportunities for work and aiding the attempt to lower unemployment levels. Moreover, businesses could be granted special tax deductions and other financial privileges when providing opportunities for the unemployed to be involved in environmental projects. The creation of green jobs, particularly for youth, is an imperative for regenerating the world's economies. Sustainable employment opens the possibilities for disadvantaged groups and youth to develop their employment potential and also creates new jobs and work opportunities, which is an ethical imperative in a responsible economy.

Too often, people view the protection of the environment as someone else's job. They consider that industry or the government should have the responsibility for cleaning up pollution. If we are to succeed in reversing global environmental degradation, people everywhere must be imbued with a love and respect for the environment.

Bio-education for a global responsibility

The best way to protect bios today and for future generations is to foster an environmentally aware and motivated society that values and nurtures the environment. This is the goal and vision of bio-education, which promotes environmental protection at the core of every academic and professional endeavour.



The purpose and responsibility of bio-education is to uplift the spirit of humanity and to reverse the crisis in values. By providing interdisciplinary models with environmental considerations in every speciality, bio-education seeks to apply environmental protection to every human endeavour.

To advance this vision, B.I.O. launched the International University for the Bio-Environment (I.U.B.E.) in 1990. This educational initiative urges scholars, decision-makers, diplomats, business leaders, teachers and students to actively contribute to the development of an environmentally conscious society. Bearing in mind that universities should be, by definition, "universal," the I.U.B.E. promotes a model bio-education and acts as a catalyst to accelerate environmental awareness and impart a biocentric message to students and training professionals around the world. Leading educators and decision-makers infuse existing educational institutions with bios promoting values.

An essential vehicle for making bio-education available to as many individuals as possible, is the I.U.B.E.'s e-learning programme, a series of online environmental courses that have so

far elicited the participation of representatives from 119 countries. The goal of these courses is to address the urgent need to improve quality of life and to mobilise each individual to participate in protecting our common environment and its rich biodiversity. By using technological advances in this positive way, a uniquely rich source of information and training material can be placed at the fingertips of teachers, students and professionals around the world.

Bio-assessment of technology – securing the continuity of life

Technology is advancing at a breathtaking pace. What was considered groundbreaking yesterday is commonplace today and will be obsolete tomorrow. Technology expands human potential, but can also have disastrous consequences if it proceeds without concern for its social and environmental impacts. Time and again, we have witnessed the emergence of new technologies which promised positive change, but which ultimately created greater problems than they solved. An analogy can be drawn between the current economic crisis and the risks posed by new technology that has not been thoroughly evaluated. The cause of the recent global economic meltdown has been attributed by many to the widespread acquisition of new and highly risky financial instruments. These instruments were unregulated, and when they began to collapse, they took some giants of finance and the global economy with them. Similarly, new technologies which have not met rigorous scientific scrutiny may also have severe and unintended consequences. There is an urgent need to provide international oversight of new technologies that will confirm the safety of their use to humans and the environment before they are applied to consumer, commercial or other uses.

A “bio-assessment of technology,” ensuring technological and economic progress that supports the environment would bridge the gap between technology and societal values. In a dialectic exchange of views, presenting a thesis and antithesis and then creating a synthesis of new concepts, ways of reducing negative environmental impact could be identified so as to truly benefit from the contributions of technological breakthroughs. Emphasis should be placed on the eradication of factors causing the decline of values in society, so as to harness environmental deterioration, species extinction, water and atmospheric pollution, climate change, soil erosion, acid rain and nuclear waste. This is a crucial responsibility for humanity if we are to develop technologies that respect and protect bios.

In our global effort to defend life, genetic diversity should not be overlooked. The true wealth of our planet is in the sheer breadth, richness and beauty of plants and animals. However, many of these species are being lost by resource plundering, and careless economic growth. B.I.O. proposes that we safeguard this wealth of life on our planet by creating *genetic banks* which preserve the genetic material of endemic plant and animal species and thereby protect biodiversity. The new technologies available in the field of genetics can be applied to preserving genetic variety in urban green spaces and stimulate wider interest and knowledge of the natural world. The preservation of genetic material can also be used in programmes relevant to human diseases and, therefore, have wide applications in medicine. In rural areas, local genetic banks can preserve genetic material from endemic crop species. This can help to restore genetic variation in agricultural crops and result in pest-resistant, high-yield varieties which do not depend on chemical fertilisers.

Bio-energy for combating climate change

The consumption of energy drives the engine of our urbanised society. However, the impacts of energy based on fossil fuels on the global environment and its contribution to climate change make it imperative that we develop more sustainable energy sources. Raging wildfires in Russia and deadly floods sweeping across central Europe and Pakistan are signals that climate change is occurring sooner than expected. It is therefore more urgent than ever to devote greater resources to the development of new energy technologies, which do not pollute the atmosphere and which do not contribute to global warming. Biological models can, once again, serve as paradigms for clean and renewable energy.

Algae are tiny biological factories that use photosynthesis to transform carbon dioxide and sunlight into energy. Algae can grow in salt water, freshwater or even contaminated water, at sea or in ponds, and on land not suitable for food production. Moreover, algae should grow even better when fed extra CO₂, the main greenhouse gas, and organic material like sewage.

A *microbial fuel cell* (MFC) converts the chemical energy found in a bio-convertible substrate directly into electricity. To achieve this, bacteria are used as a catalyst to convert substrate into electrons. The bacteria are very small (size approximately 1 μm) organisms which can convert a huge variety of organic compounds into CO₂, water and energy. The micro-organisms use the produced energy to grow and to maintain their metabolism. However, by using a MFC, it is possible to harvest a part of this microbial energy in the form of electricity.

Hydrogen has unique potential for reducing today's dependency on fossil fuels. Hydrogen can be produced from renewable resources, such as water and agricultural products, eliminating the net production of CO₂ and helping to alleviate global warming. The transition to a hydrogen based economy begins with the commercial production of hydrogen-based fuel cells, where it is efficient and intrinsically clean, for all end-use applications. Additional research is needed in this area to reduce the cost of hydrogen production, solve hydrogen storage problems and in the longer term, integrate renewable energy sources into hydrogen fuel production.

A large-scale embrace of alternative energy would also create new jobs in the design, manufacturing, installation, servicing, and marketing of new technologies and products. Jobs also arise indirectly from the supply of raw materials, transportation, equipment, and professional services. In the transportation sector, the use of hydrogen and fuel cells are creating a new concept of car technology and new areas of research and development. Advancements in solar energy and the use of environmentally friendly construction materials have led to the creation of green buildings. Some green buildings are now completely and solely powered by solar thermal and electric energy that operates all systems, including heating, cooling, lighting, computers, water pumps, and office equipment. As incentives, companies could be granted tax cuts or other financial privileges for engaging the unemployed in jobs that minimize greenhouse gas emissions, promote the use of clean and renewable energy, and contribute to the overall effort to combat climate change.

Bio-diplomacy to meet the global economic challenge

Economic growth cannot be achieved on a planet ravaged by pollution, hunger and disease. The over-exploitation of environmental resources will not lead to long-term prosperity. What is urgently needed is a common strategy, a global defence protocol against climate change, the loss of biodiversity and natural resources, environmental pollution, and the deterioration of land and water ecosystems. Just as all the parts of the human body need to function together in harmonious coordination to maintain a healthy individual, modern society desperately needs a common vision to secure a harmonious and peaceful future.

Bio-diplomacy – a concept pioneered by B.I.O. at a time when the world community had not fully realised the urgency of adopting common environmental policy - focuses on the interdependence of all forms of life. Bio-diplomacy supports efforts to maintain biological and cultural diversity and seeks to improve human relations and to attain the goal of world peace by replacing current diplomatic attitudes with a complete international and intercultural perspective. Within this framework, respect for human rights and the existence of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies is an undeniable principle. International cooperation in environmental protection enhances the quality of life and strengthens efforts for peace and security.

Bio-diplomacy is an opportunity for the aspirations of sovereign states and civil society to converge in pursuit of long-term policy and action, enhancing a spirit of solidarity among states. It recognises that cultural differentiation constitutes the wealth of the body of humanity. Humanity is part of the overall body of bios, where DNA, the genetic code for every living organism, is the link connecting all forms of life. Environmental threats are

international problems. Trees, the source of oxygen on our planet, can be considered the “lungs” of the body of bios. When a person’s lungs are damaged, the entire body suffers. Similarly, the widespread destruction of trees and forests that we are seeing today has drastic implications for the health of our entire planet. The required solutions entail the development of bold plans of action for international co-operation. Nations must declare war on environmental destruction and abuse. Foreign policy should shift from a fragmented, competitive framework to a vision of unity and interdependence. Bio-diplomacy seeks to improve human relations and attain the goal of world peace by replacing current diplomatic attitudes with a comprehensive international and intercultural perspective.

Re-channelling defence infrastructure

B.I.O. believes that the greatest challenge for the 21st century will be the permanent reconfiguration of defence infrastructure into programmes for the defence of the planet. The nations of the world must stop investing in instruments of destruction and begin investing in instruments of peace for the protection of our common environment. Competition to find better methods to destroy life, should be replaced with cooperation to find ways to save it. Time is of the essence, and this new vision is urgently needed.

National defence is a major priority among most nations of the world. A substantial portion of national budgets is committed to the maintenance of armed forces and the acquisition of weapons, such as highly sophisticated fighter aircraft, warships, submarines and missiles. Globally, about 10% of central government budgets are devoted to defence.

The environment, as a common point of reference, can bring all peoples of the world together, in a state of harmony and the absence of war. The conversion of war regimes to programmes for the preservation of the environment would guarantee a better future. Such a programme would not have negative economic effects, but rather, it would stimulate the global economy and provide jobs, since existing defence industries would be re-tooled into “defence-for-life” industries. Existing defence manpower and equipment can be adapted for peaceful tasks such as reforestation, water resource clean up, soil erosion recovery, protection of the ozone layer and de-contamination of areas affected by nuclear radiation. These problems represent real threats to the continuation of life on our planet, and no human resource should be spared in the effort to contain them.

The military offers a disciplined and trained source of manpower, readily available equipment such as road vehicles, ships and aircraft, communications and transportation capabilities, trained medical staff and logistics like tents, food and blankets. It has engineering capabilities and can work on civil projects, such as building or repairing roads, hospitals and schools. This resource has been already used to respond to natural disasters and to provide humanitarian assistance in areas ravaged by poverty and disease. In the same way, the military can apply its resources and know-how to work on projects of environmental restoration, including reforestation, erosion control, habitat and species protection, tree-planting, bringing fish back to the oceans, and cleaning up contaminated waters and soils.

Building a “green” society

A new structure of society and governance is needed to enable us to overcome the current crises. A “green society” of security and transparency, where bios is valued over greed and where peace and harmony replaces discord and destruction, can help us understand and value the multiple links between the environment, the economy and the future development of society.

Decisions on our common future should no longer rest solely on world leaders, who can evade or even obstruct meaningful change. Every individual can and should be involved. By giving priority to individual voices to be heard through a World Referendum and by encouraging the participation of every individual and every profession in Environmental Olympics we can elicit the personal involvement of every citizen in the race to save the environment.

The clock is ticking. Can we hear it and act now, or will we face the continued decline in our environment and quality of life? The pursuit of narrow self-interest at both the individual and national levels has resulted in a global crisis which threatens world peace, as well as the natural environment and human prosperity. We urgently need to change these trends by building a responsible and sound economy that can lead humanity to a brighter future. A bios-promoting vision that places the ethics of bios at the heart of societal structure can provide the necessary framework to achieve a world in which the gift of bios is truly appreciated.

The need for action is now. Climate change is accelerating desertification, plant and animal species are disappearing from the earth at unprecedented rates, human populations are being displaced and driven to poverty and disease, the credit crunch is affecting consumers' environmental efforts across the globe. Humanity can no longer afford to disregard the close relationship between its actions and the environment. Meeting today's challenges requires new ways of stimulating creativity in politics and policy-making, in technology, industry and commerce, in education and the arts, and in social and community development. The widespread adoption of environmental thinking is the only way to alleviate economic instability and create a new green society of hope.

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Author's Note: All of the above references are available electronically at www.biopolitics.gr