



BN/08/3.2  
May 2008

## **Briefing Note**

### **New Programme of the Club of Rome**

The Club of Rome is an independent, not-for-profit organization with an international membership. It draws on the insights and expertise of its members from all regions of the world, from different cultures and histories, from different fields of science and public policy and from academia, civil society and the corporate sector. Over the past forty years, the Club has clarified threats, opportunities and choices and has advanced practical solutions by provoking debate, by briefing top leaders in government, business and civil society and by disseminating publications, some of them best sellers.

By its Statutes, the Club of Rome is independent of any political, ideological and religious interests. Its essential mission is "to act as a global catalyst for change through the identification and analysis of the crucial problems facing humanity and the communication of such problems to the most important public and private decision makers as well as to the general public." The Club of Rome brings together up to 100 Members from different regions, cultures, and fields of expertise. The work of the active, international members is complemented by around 50 honorary members and 40 Associate Members and by the activities of 33 National Associations throughout the world. In addition, the work of the Club is enriched by the inputs of carefully selected younger experts, practitioners and activists through a special think tank, "tt30".

At its General Assembly in Madrid in September 2007, the Club renewed its leadership and its management structure. It is diversifying its membership, strengthening its secretariat and has relocated its international secretariat to Winterthur in the Canton of Zurich. To complement the ongoing activities of its Members and its National Associations, the Club is launching in parallel, an international cooperative programme of research and consultation on the broad theme: "A New Path for World Development." This will engage thinkers, practitioners and activists in key regions and countries to undertake interdisciplinary and multicultural thinking on crucial global issues. A high level meeting of the Club was held in Berlin on 6th November at the invitation of H.E. Dr. Horst Koehler, President of Germany on the topic: "Policy Challenges in the next Phase of Globalization." This enabled the Club to make a rapid start with its new programme.

The Programme on a New Path for World Development will be based on close collaboration with experts and partner institutions all over the world. It will be implemented over three years through the following six main activities: dialogue among Members of the Club; web-based collaboration engaging international experts and practitioners on selected issues; policy briefings for top level policy makers in the public and private sectors and in legislatures; production of materials for education and public information; a programme to inform and engage young people; and the creation of a global data base on crucial issues and methodologies derived from the programme.

The Programme will focus on five "clusters" of related issues:

1. **Environment and Resources.** This cluster relates climate change, peak oil, ecosystems and water. Radical and rapid social and economic transformations will be needed to avert runaway climate change and ecological breakdown;
2. **Globalisation:** This cluster relates interdependence, distribution of wealth and income, demographic change, employment, trade and finance. Rising inequalities and imbalances associated with the present path of globalisation risk the breakdown of the world economic and financial systems;
3. **World Development:** This cluster relates sustainable development, demographic growth, poverty, environmental stress, food production, health and employment. The scandal of abiding poverty, deprivation, inequity and exclusion in a wealthy world must be corrected;
4. **Social Transformation:** This cluster relates social change, gender equity, values and ethics, religion and spirituality, culture, identity and behaviour. The values and behaviour on which the present path of world development is based must change if peace and progress are to be preserved within the tightening human and environmental limits;
5. **Peace and Security:** This cluster relates justice, democracy, governance, solidarity, security and peace. The present path of world development risks alienation, polarization, violence and conflict; the preservation of peace is vital in itself but is also a precondition for progress and for the resolution of the issues which threaten the future.

Within each of these clusters, the issues are strongly linked: thus each group constitutes a coherent and manageable field for analysis. The links between the clusters will be accounted for as the programme proceeds, within the overall integrating framework of A New Path for World Development.

The Club will convene five high-level expert meetings successively over the three year period, one on each of the clusters of issues identified above. Each meeting should produce a clear statement on the issues, risks and opportunities ahead with an outline of the principal strategies and of the practical measures required in response. In relation to each cluster of issues, a web-based research network will be established through which the participants in the expert meetings, together with additional experts, can carry on a process of dialogue and research to develop a deeper understanding of the issues and to elaborate specific recommendations and proposals.

The Club will finalise the Programme at its 40th Annual Assembly in Rome in June 2008 and will initiate activities at a modest level using its own limited resources complemented by sponsorship of specific events and activities etc. In addition, a sustained effort will be made to generate a level of financial support for its full and timely implementation. The Programme will conclude with a major international event and a Final Report, presenting to leaders and the public the integrated results and proposing specific lines of action.