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GeoProgress Global Forum (GGF) 2020-'21 on: **BUILDING THE I.E.F. - International Environment Fund.** **For a fair International Environmental System.**

This initiative - promoted since 2016 by the *GeoProgress Journal*, published by Geoprogress, a non-profit research organization - is focusing in 2020 and 2021 on some key issues for sustainable global development. Among these, the priority is undoubtedly to adjust and gradually rebalance the international environmental system and in particular where and how to find the financial means to promote this rebalancing. Additional key points are: the promotion of a sustainable development for all, coping with the unsustainability of the current economic development, which requires everywhere the research and dissemination of sounder technologies, but not least the search for alternative models of development.

For this purpose Geoprogress intends to update the proposal to build the international Environment Fund (IEF) conceived as an international instrument for rebalancing and regulating the terrestrial ecosystem¹.

“The IEF would act as a compensation fund and regulator of environmental balance between nations, based upon a criterion of equity and international justice. This would be supplied by countries that are, environmentally speaking, debtors (essentially the industrialised nations) in proportion to their environmental deficit and per-capita income, and should finance the relevant projects and environmental policies of countries that are environmental creditors, in relation to their environmental surplus, to their per-capita income, and to their efforts in favour of protecting the environment for all humanity”.

The main actions planned towards this goal are:

1) Workshop for the discussion of the papers and of specific corrections-integrations to the original IEF proposal; definition of a new proposal (October 2020) to be submitted to national and international institutions;

¹ Presented and discussed at the United Nations Workshop on Creative Financing for Environmentally Sound Technologies, Belém do Pará (Brazil) 2nd-7th December 1990 - New York, United Nations Center for Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), Document 21, Group F -. The proposal supplemented by other contributions to this UNCSTD meeting was accepted by the United Nations Secretariat and brought to the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, but unfortunately not accepted due to the opposition of some States and evidently because the time was still not ripe from the political and cultural aspects.

- 2) Special Issue of the *GeoProgress Journal*, for publication of the scientific contributions, prior submission to referees, and other papers and results, as documents of the Workshop (by the end of December 2020);
- 3) International Conference at the European Union Parliament or at other international organizations, with the participation of MEPs and of representatives of governments from different countries (early December 2020 or February 2021).

Call for papers

Assuming the motivations and the outline of the original proposal, as illustrated by F. Adamo in *GeoProgress Journal*, 2017, i.1. (<http://www.geoprogress.eu/geoprogress-journal-vol-4-issue-1-2017/>) the multiple knowledge required for the construction and operation of the I.E.F. - to which scholars and experts from various disciplines (from natural sciences to statistics, economics and finance, geography and law) are invited to contribute - should allow to obtain in particular:

- 1) an updated definition of the countries that are environmentally debtors and creditors, which should no longer be limited to CO₂ emissions alone (an indicator that remains fundamental and whose acceptance would already be an important step forward): the emissions corresponding to the difference between imports and exports of tangible goods should be added. Particularly useful and appreciated would be papers on setting up the criteria for the distinction of countries and the amount of their respective environmental debts or credits, for the conversion of environmental debt into financial debt or in an annual amount of money to be paid to the IEF², for setting the maximum

² “**For the immediate constitution of the I.E.F.**, it is proposed to use: 1. the funds pledged to the “Global Environmental Facility” (GEF) and the two funds managed by the same GEF; 2. the sources arising from the mechanisms of debt conversion: firstly, of the debt conversion into a multilateral institution, but also the bilateral public loans. The management of these funds should be entrusted immediately to the I.E.F.; 3. part of public aid or, better still, the equivalent of its possible increase. The part we propose to use immediately for the I.E.F. could be equal to 0.25% of the Gross National Product (G.N.P.) of the developed countries; if these countries finally decide to keep their promises, and to rapidly bring their aid up to a minimum of 0.70% of the G.N.P., as required by the same Development Aid Committee of the O.E.C.D.; 4. private donations which could be stimulated by international investment in ecobonds, launched by the United Nations with the collaboration of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs).

Revenues should then be represented under the following headings: A) voluntary private contributions, such as direct donations and the possibility in rich countries of deducting a small tax-free amount from profits and personal income; B) rent and royalties, paid by rich states and private companies (such as biochemical and pharmaceutical industries): respectively for the concessions of use of vast regions of tropical rain forests - to be conceived as biological (and climatic) “mines” and water supplies, and to be cared for as scientific parks - for research purposes, for the gathering of natural substances and the economic exploitation of research results; C) part of the revenue from individual states, generated by the eco-tax, an indirect tax which is gradually making headway in industrialised countries (at least in some of them) and which is under discussion in the European Parliament. The eco-taxes should concern the consumption of the following categories of goods: C.1) noxious products (eliminable and non-eliminable), taxation to be restricted, for the moment, to fossil and other fuels (carbon tax), and to some heavy metals (such as cadmium); C.2) goods which are under-priced by the market and do not reflect the physical scarcity of non-renewable natural resources used in their manufacture, such as certain rare minerals (for which the taxable sum should be shared between the fund and the producing country); C.3) goods which are under-priced with reference to the physical quantity of the renewable natural resources employed (for example, the extension of occupied soils); for the moment we could cite some agricultural products typical of tropical countries (or even a product prevalently exported by developing countries) and in particular products for which trade terms have deteriorated (e.g. coffee, cocoa, leather, cotton, etc.) and whose demand is not very elastic; C.4) goods produced in rich countries with the aid of customs duties and states subsidies, to the detriment of the economies of poor countries and the environment; in particular, this proposal of a swing away from economic protectionism towards nature protection, might concern some of the products over which... the W.T.O. still finds obstacles, and help to get the situation moving. Evidently the sum payable to the I.E.F. differs according to each type of product taxed and to the category of each country. With regard to the much-discussed carbon tax (Pearce, 1989a; Brown, 1990), I.E.F. debtors should be those countries with a net per capita emission of carbon that exceeds one ton per annum. Their payments, in proportion to quantities in excess of these limits, could be defined with reference to the rough cost of reforestation which would, in theory, allow the absorption of a corresponding quantity of carbon-dioxide” (Adamo, *op.cit.* in the text).

amount available from the IEF for the financing of projects for the protection and improvement of the natural environment, and projects for sustainable local development, for each creditor country; define virtuous behaviour by debtor countries (for example emission reduction thresholds, reforestations) worthy of prizes that further incentivize them to improve their ecological conditions;

2) an illustration and critical analysis of the current financial mechanisms used by ecologically debtor countries to accomplish their financial engagements in favour of our common environment, the amount of these engagements; the definition of which of the current known mechanisms and of other possible new ones are consistent with the ethic assumptions of the IEF and could be used as revenues to feed the International Environment Fund (IEF) by each type of country according to its socio-economic conditions. The mechanisms suggested in the original proposal of the IEF2 and others in use or that are expected to be valuable are the subject of the analysis. Referring to the financial mechanisms in use it would be useful to know in which countries they are employed and the amount of annual revenues that derives from them;

3) the redefinition of the **organization and administration of the Fund**, of the priorities of environmental problems and therefore: of the actions to be financed in the ecologically creditor countries, on projects presented by public and private or mixed subjects of the country concerned or in partnership or by international bodies; of the monitoring system³.

Geoprogress invites scholars and experts of various disciplines to contribute towards the above objectives and/or develop related themes, by sending to info@geoprogress.eu:

a) scientific papers (max 16 pages in word, Times New Roman, 12): state-of-the-art research papers, original and quantitative studies that provide knowledge for the construction or operation of the IEF and anyway contribute to develop connected themes. These should be used as integration of the new IEF proposal and submitted to referees for publication as articles in a Special issue of the **GeoProgress Journal**;

b) short papers (max 5 pages in word Times New Roman, 12), that suggest corrections/integrations to the original IEF proposal.

Deadlines for sending the contributions:

- by **October 15, 2020** - the **Abstract** (title and max 15 lines) of the proposed paper
- by **November 15, 2020** - **Full text of the paper**

³ **Outgoings** are represented by various forms of financing, the distribution of which is based upon criteria which can be inferred from proposals for revenues and, besides a sense of fairness, also take into account the policies practiced by environmental creditor countries. The following financial supports should not be neglected: I) public and private companies' projects: tax relief on loans and export guarantees, respectively for various forms of investment directly in the sector of sustainable technologies (better still if through international joint ventures) and for the transfer of such technologies; II) projects and programs of governments of said states, of international bodies and of NGOs: for research into sustainable technologies, the environment in its geographical aspects and in its relationship to development; for research into preventive measures and environmental recovery, for the diffusion of sustainable technologies, training programs and projects of sustainable development. III) transfer to tropical countries of rents and royalties for pluvial forests destined to be scientific parks and transfer in any case of yearly loans (obtained from the carbon tax) proportional to the environmental benefits coming from reduction in deforestation (taking 1991 as a basis). This financial transfer would represent such a financial flow as to discourage alternative uses. Its assessment would imply an appropriate geographical classification of forest regions, as we have to keep into account the different "marginal opportunity costs" (Warford, 1989; Pearce, 1989b). IV) loans at special rates to states and extra funds to firms for the reconversion, diversification and economic development in those countries that will be subject to economic loss due to environmental policies of industrialized countries and also due to the implementation of the above proposals. The latter can only be carried out gradually (*ibidem*).

Workshop on:

The Protection Our Common Environment and the Proposal of the I.E.F. - International Environment Fund

Torino, November 15, 2020

@ I.U.S.E. - Istituto Universitario di Studi Europei

The Workshop is organized with the collaboration of the University Institute of European Studies and will be held in Turin, at this Institute, or online. It will be divided into 3-4 sessions, according to the main thematic areas referred to in the previous call for papers. The papers proposed by September 30 will be presented by the authors themselves or by the session coordinator, depending on their number and above all on how the meeting will take place (online or in a conference room). Coordinators will summarize the contents and above all highlight the differences, on which the discussion will focus so as to allow participants to select the contents of the technical-scientific document to be drawn up for the establishment of the IEF.

Confirmation of the date, the program and the organizational method will be given to all participants: i.e. to all those who, by **October 15, 2020**, together with the abstract of their contribution, will send for **registration** an e-mail to info@geoprogress.eu, indicating whether they also intend to be present at the Workshop, regardless of the way in which it will take place (in a conference room or online), and indicating which of the two options they would prefer, in addition to providing Surname, Name, Home institution, Address.

Registration fee

For the partial coverage of costs and by means of donations, Geoprogress (non-profit organization) asks participants:

- 1) To those who send an **abstract** proposing a scientific paper to be then subjected to double peer review,
 - a) participating to the meeting in Turin, € **100.00**
 - b) participating to the online meeting or without being present at any meeting, € **50.00**
- 2) To those who propose a **short paper**,
 - a) participating to the meeting in Turin, € **50.00**
 - b) participating to the online meeting or without being present at any meeting, € **00.00**
- 3) To those who **only** intend to **attend the meeting** in Turin (subject to availability), a free donation.

The fee should be paid, by October 15 and anyway after our confirmation of the form of the meeting, with Bank transfer to Geoprogress (Novara, via Perrone 18) at *INTESA SAN PAOLO – Terzo Settore – Filiale 55000 Novara*, c/c 16996 BIC: BCITITMM Code Iban: **IT75R030690960610000016996**