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#10: The Urgent Need to Generate a Global Conversation on the Future of Humanity

One of the ways humanity will need to build wisdom worthy of the name of our species will be to build a global wisdom and sense of connectedness that has not been with us in the past.

In the opening of his 2008 book *Common Wealth*, Jeffrey Sachs made clear how important the development of that kind of wisdom is to success in the 21st Century:

The defining challenge of the 21st century will be to face the reality that humanity shares a common fate on a crowded planet. Our common fate will require new forms of global cooperation, a fundamental point of blinding simplicity that many world leaders have yet to understand or embrace.

In the twenty-first century, our global society will flourish or perish according to our ability to find common ground across the world on a set of shared objectives and on the practical means to achieve them.

We believe we face an urgent need to develop new forms of global cooperation both in order to address today's civilizational challenges as well as to achieve the world of Sustainable Super Abundance now available to us.

To that end, we are looking to create a Global Coalition for Sustainable Super Abundance whose first goal will be to promote a multi-level, global conversation on the future of humanity.

There is no way humanity can achieve Global Super Abundance or avoid World War III without improved global unity. None of the problems faced by humanity today can be solved by any single nation-state acting alone. There is an even greater need for unity today than there was when Sachs issued his call for global unity in 2008.

In fact, achieving global unity is the key to solving all of our challenges as well as realizing our full potential as Yuval Noah Harari made clear at his inaugural talk at CSER (Centre for the Study of Existential Risk) shortly after joining his new colleagues at Cambridge. Professor Harari explained that achieving global cooperation is critical not only to avoiding war, but to solving the challenges of climate change and AI. Harari explains that bringing humanity together is essential to solving existential risk:

“In this brief talk, I want to focus on the third existential threat that we are facing— global war— because in many ways it is the key to dealing with the other two. If humanity unites, we definitely have the resources and the wisdom to deal with both the ecological crisis and with the AI revolution. It is within our power. But if humanity is torn apart by war, that would probably doom us. Given the weapons we now possess, a third world war could directly destroy human civilization, of course, but even if we avoid blowing ourselves to pieces the third world war would destroy us indirectly because it would focus our attention on fighting each other and would prevent us from dealing effectively with the ecological crisis and the AI revolution.”

Harari is exactly correct, the only way we overcome our civilizational challenges or achieve the Sustainable Super Abundance now available to us is to find ways to urgently achieve global unity

Twenty global leaders working with the Oxford Martin School of the 21st Century issued a similar call for unity in a 2013 Report: Now for the Long Term. At the beginning of the report, they quoted the school’s founder, Dr. James Martin, who highlighted that “humanity is at a crossroads” and that this “could be our best century ever, or our worst.” They then went on to define five principles for long-term success. The fifth principle they cited was as follows:

Establish a Common Platform of Understanding: The ability to address today’s global challenges is undermined by the absence of a collective vision for society. To remedy this, the Commission urges renewed dialogue on an updated set of shared global values around which a unified and enduring pathway for society can be built. The entire document may be found [here](#).

Perhaps the most urgent call for the need for global unity came from UNESCO, beseeching educators from around the world to reimagine our futures together and create a new social contract for education.

UNESCO is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It is a specialized agency of the UN that promotes international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture, and communication to contribute to peace and global security. Founded in 1945, UNESCO aims to foster dialogue and mutual understanding among cultures and peoples through its various programs and initiatives.

In November 2021, UNESCO published only the third global report on education in its 75-year history. The report, entitled *Reimagining our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education* calls for a fundamental transformation of education systems

worldwide to address the challenges facing humanity and the planet. The report proposes a new social contract for education that aims to unite us around collective endeavors and provide the knowledge and innovation needed to shape sustainable and peaceful futures for all.

Compiled over two years, the report was surprisingly honest and clear in terms of the need for education to transform itself to meet the needs of our modern 21st-century world. The following are some excerpts from the report:

“If anything brought us together over the last year and a half, it is our feeling of vulnerability about the present and uncertainty about the future. We now know more than ever that urgent action is needed to change humanity’s course and save the planet from further disruptions. But this action must be long-term and combined with strategic thinking.”

“If the report teaches us one thing, it is this: We need to take urgent action to change course, because the future of people depends on the future of the planet, and both are at risk. The report proposes a new social contract for education—one that aims to rebuild our relationships with each other, with the planet, and with technology.”

“As a species, we are at the point in our collective history where we have the greatest access ever to knowledge and to tools that enable us to collaborate. The potential for engaging humanity in creating better futures together has never been greater. “

“The choices we collectively make today will determine our shared futures. Whether we survive or perish, whether we live in peace or we allow violence to define our lives, whether we relate to the Earth in ways that are sustainable or not, are questions that will be profoundly shaped and decided by choices we make today and by our capabilities to achieve common goals.”

“We face an existential choice: either continue down an unsustainable path or radically change course.

“Everyone today has a heavy obligation to both current and future generations to ensure that our world is one of abundance and scarcity, and that everyone enjoys the same rights to the fullest. Despite the urgency of action and in conditions of great uncertainty, we have reason to be full of hope. Education—the way we organize teaching and learning throughout life— has long played a foundational role in the transformation of human societies. It connects you with the world and to each other, exposes new possibilities, and strengthens our capacities for dialogue and action. **But to shape, peaceful, just, and sustainable futures, education itself must be transformed.”**

“Informed by a global consultation process that engaged one million people from around the world, the goal of the report has been “to forge a new social contract for education that will help build a peaceful, just, and sustainable future for all.”

“The authors of the report understood “that the visions, principles, and proposals presented by the report were simply meant as a starting point” and that “translating and contextualizing” these principles would require a “collective effort.”

They therefore worked hard to clarify that the report is “neither a manual nor blueprint but the opening up of a vital conversation.” In view of the fact that the report was published before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the seismic changes launched by Chat GPT later that year, or the tragic events of October 7, we believe the vital conversation called for by UNESCO is more urgent today, in 2025, than ever before.

Indeed, we are of the view that UNESCO’s call for a vital global conversation on education needs to be taken up across all levels of our global civil society. As we will see below, education is a function of the needs of our now global society.

It is precisely these kinds of conversations relative to the future of humanity, that we intend to generate from now until the year 2050 using this book as a launching pad. We believe that if, if, if, we can keep our global civilization intact until then, and if we can find ways to cooperate on the best ways to use dramatic advances in technology to advance humanity, we can create a world where by 2050 every human being alive then will have the potential to live better than the billionaires of today.