

The next world - some food for thought

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Transport, consumption, relationship with work ... The current pandemic calls into question the deepest habits of our societies and highlights some of our dependencies such as our transportation network (reduction of 75% of claims in France since the start of confinement¹). Today, when half of humanity is confined, the question arises of the next. How to get out of the crisis? What are the lessons to be learned from this period? How can this pandemic be seen as an opportunity on a global level?

In our hyper-globalization, one tangible thing concerns us all: the climate. Economic activity having been drastically reduced in recent weeks, greenhouse gas emissions logically follow the same trend. In addition, in many cities and regions of the world, pollution from transport - excluding fine particles - has decreased massively. Air pollution, CO2 emissions, the declines displayed are spectacular and rapid². Nature also proves its resilience and that it stays at our doorstep. Discreetly but undeniably, we no longer hear birds singing, certain animals appearing in the city... Many examples around the planet are notable³. Certainly, this nature no longer exists but it shows us that it is still possible to do things for the planet. Could we still act in the face of climate risk and have a rapid positive impact?

Where policies show their limits in quickly implementing measures to match the ambitions displayed during the Paris agreement, the current context offers us an opportunity to do otherwise after this crisis. Indeed, after the health crisis will come the economic crisis. States are going into debt more than ever before and it will be necessary to invest massively to recreate. So why not otherwise? For the International Energy Agency, governments have "a historic opportunity to accelerate the ecological transition"⁴.

Therefore, several avenues deserve special attention and avoid a post-crisis rebound effect which would overcompensate for what we have not consumed in recent weeks / months.

¹ https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2020/04/02/coronavirus-les-accidents-de-la-route-sont-en-forte-baisse-la-maif-rend-100-millions-d-euros-a-ses-assures_6035337_3234.html

² <https://www.bbc.com/afrique/monde-52016620>

³ <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/03/30/world/science-health-world/coronavirus-lockdown-nature/#.Xo3KJe9BsU9>

⁴ <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2020/03/17/governments-historic-opportunity-accelerate-clean-energy-transition-iea-says/>

1. The International Labor Organization⁵ could look into the more systematic promotion of telework for a maximum of jobs and propose to register it in labor law at the national level;
2. Promote UN and other inter-agency projects (AFD, NGOs) by including investment funds to establish joint projects (for example, the ILO mentioned above could propose, with the support of UNEP, a period systematic annual use of telework during the nesting of certain species in very specific areas of the globe);
3. Promote a general carbon tax to the world, in particular in the world of international / intercontinental transport and regulate low-cost prices;
4. The various plans to support the economy and employment from investment funds (EIB, IMF, Green Deal with 1000 billion investment...) should be conditioned on projects (including support for companies) who engage in low-carbon economic transition and local projects;
5. Massive funding of international collaborative projects relating to clean energy systems (including nuclear which is decarbonized) both for massive decarbonization and for a new wave of job creation;
6. Relocation of food production to the local level in partnership with the FAO;
7. Rethink multilateralism, world leadership for ecological transition and the role of the resolutions of the UN Security Council, in particular for the implementation of the above proposals;
8. The current period highlights the fragility (and the end?) Of the petroleum industry⁶⁷ (too expensive extraction method for example) and should be an opportunity to turn to renewable energies and take advantage of the moment to tax heavily oil now that the price is very low;
9. The crisis shows a dependence of our societies on electricity, it is therefore an opportunity to produce it in a clean way (a blatant example of an oil giant, for the boss of Total "Electricity will be the "Energy" of the 21st century ");
10. Be aware that after transportation, it is heating that consumes the most energy worldwide. It must therefore be made a major issue;
11. Enhance "useful" jobs thanks to the ILO: we see it for garbage collectors, nurses ... and go through a policy of global redistribution.

Beyond the various proposals above, which for some can only happen at the local level (clean energy systems, upgrading of jobs), it is interesting to emphasize that the international community is in the best place to promote collaboration and, ultimately, redefine the globalization that we have known so far. Finally, let us be aware that two scales of measures must be put in place:

⁵ <https://www.ilo.org/>

⁶ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/8848g5/government-agency-warns-global-oil-industry-is-on-the-brink-of-a-meltdown

⁷ http://tupa.gtk.fi/raportti/arkisto/70_2019.pdf

- Measures for a long-term transition (reshaping the current economic model, our globalization and our use of clean energy);
- Immediate micro-measures because some countries need quick help. The most disadvantaged before the crisis will be the most impacted and the current situation will exacerbate the inequalities already present - just as with the upheavals resulting from climate change where the least responsible are the most impacted.