

# TÄLLBERG FOUNDATION

## Notes from Tällberg Alumni Reunion

*Amerongen Castle*, Amerongen (The Netherlands)

7 December 2007

In his introduction, **Marcello Palazzi** (Tällberg Foundation and Progressio Foundation) welcomed all the participants and Tällberg alumni. “Tonight we have the chance to hear the visions and analyses of the speakers. Since we have some serious issues to face we can profit from sharing what we are individually doing.” A film showing selected Tällberg Moments was presented.

The evening’s moderator, **Tom Cummings** (Executive Learning Partnership), introduced the evening. As an introduction he used a striking metaphor. On his way to Amerongen Castle he saw a little restaurant which was called “Wereld van Verschil”. Literally translated this means “World of Differences”. Mr Cummings used this metaphor as a moment to realise which difference we all have made today, no matter how small.

### Introductory reflections

**Ruud Lubbers**, Former Prime Minister of The Netherlands, the Netherlands Energy Research Centre (ECN), Earth Charter.

Mr. Lubbers speaks about the political dimension of sustainability. Modernity has learned society an important lesson. States are still important as they are the key political institutions. However, business and civil society have become increasingly important. Market economy has become the one system for the whole world. As a reaction to this a strong wave of anti-globalisation has come up. Civil society and the human capital within companies generated pressure on business to make a start with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR has now become a core business of many companies which is a very positive change.

In the ‘Earth charter’ two factors are stressed:

1. Sustainable development is absolutely necessary. Climate change is a threat to the world. The Rotterdam Climate Committee is a wonderful opportunity to implement a positive change.

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2. Fear is playing a negative role. Fear is the downside of upcoming spirituality. We need courageous political leaders. Besides, government has to be understood by the people.

We should realise that we are all stakeholders. Diversity is not a threat and therefore we should not fear it. In contrary, diversity leads to creativity which we need to solve the big problems we are dealing with.

**Peter Bakker**, CEO of TNT

TNT is a worldwide operating company delivering goods from location A to B. TNT has approximately 160,000 employees, 30,000 trucks and 50 aircrafts. For Mr Bakker a TNT aircraft represents globalisation due to the fact that people doing business with each other around the world results in TNT shipping these goods all over the world.

Five years ago TNT started to focus on Corporate Social Responsibility which was uncommon in those days. Mr Bakker was often approached by other business leaders and CEOs. The reactions were often not very positive. However, currently the importance of CSR is much more commonly accepted.

TNT is an important sponsor of the United Nation's World Food Programme. This cooperation also benefits TNT; employees feel better and find their work more valuable.

Mr. Bakker argues that we are talking too much about climate change and urges us to start *doing*. Customers want us to act. Business men and women can clean their own shop but must realise that they are customers themselves; They have the purchasing power to put pressure on their suppliers to act in a responsible and sustainable way.

Leadership is very important and everybody should give the right example and start to reconsider their own actions.

TNT mapped all processes and aims to make them all clean. E.g.: operational vehicles on electricity, video conferences to decrease the travel budget by 20% and a green building that gives energy back to the environment.

Another way for TNT to contribute to a more sustainable world is by making their employees and families aware of the problem and encourage them to start changing. With 160,000 employees (with on average three family members) TNT can reach almost half a million people.

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**Peter Blom**, Triodos bank

Triodos is a social bank and the first goal is to contribute to sustainability and act in a sustainable manner. From this follows that growth is not a main purpose for Triodos despite the fact that Triodos did accomplish a continuous growth in the past decades.

Mr. Blom describes that we can see a cross road in the business world:

1. Small company's developing new and creative ways which lead to paradigm shifts.
2. Big companies are making very small and steady steps.

His main analysis rests on the need of a paradigm shift in how we think the economy is structured and how we approach the economy. In the traditional point of view capital is the central and decisive production factor. Mr. Blom points out that nowadays capital is abundant and contributed to the detachment of the financial system from the real economy. In order to make a change towards sustainability we have to contribute much more importance to the production factors of labour and especially nature.

Banks are much more than something you just use. A challenge for banks is to find new forms of stakeholder value since the current concept of shareholder value is based on profit and thus on the factor of capital.

## Questions

**Question:** What kind of challenges do you encounter? Lack of participation of politicians? Is there a difference between regions in the world? What is the role of the youth?

- Lubbers: The world is full of initiatives. We need to create families and communities based on values and respect to take action. Change is not only the responsibility of rich countries. We need a concept of values like the Declaration of Human Rights. This declaration should be extended. The 'Earth Charter' is not only addressing governments, but also ourselves. Values are pretty much the same in different regions, but at the moment we do not have the courage to see diversity as a positive thing.
- Bakker: Ask yourself a question: What are *you* going to do about it? Things are not too big. As an employee, ask employers what you can do to improve sustainability.
- Blom: An attractive career path does not attract people anymore; values of a company do! It is not only about money anymore. That is a positive change within the new generation.

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**Question:** Is it not true that diversity has to be rooted in identity and culture?

- Lubbers: Diversity always needs rules. Values and rules come from traditions in a groups of people. Differences in culture and religion should not make us forget this and it is no use to begin from scratch. As an individual you always need a format of values.
- Bakker: Do not focus on difference but on similarities. When you confront people with the problem of people suffering from hunger you see that whatever culture they represent they all act according to common values.

**Question:** What is it what we are not doing yet in order to really make a difference?

- Bakker: We are not following the logic of traditional business where consolidation is essential to survive and improve. Shareholders are powerful change agents. The world of NGOs is completely fragmented and we should consolidate the NGOs to create synergy and efficiency.

## Further reflections

**Annemieke Roobeek, Meeting More Minds**

What did Tällberg do to me? It inspired me to become more active with the sustainability issue. This activity resulted for example in steering projects on TU Delft, becoming the chairperson of NCTW and using ‘Cradle to cradle’ methods. It is Mrs. Roobeek’s goal to make sustainability practical to the academic world.

**Joost Douma** (Secretary General of 3IG, the International Interfaith Investment Group) Mr Douma formulated some characteristics of religion in general and he referred to the special about religion in The Economist a few weeks ago. His work has taught Mr. Douma the following:

1. Religion is growing
2. Religions are the longest living multinationals
3. Assets of religious organisations are enormous

Religious groups with a Jewish or Christian background are the main group within 3IG. However also other religions are customers or are working together with 3IG. Mr Douma states that the religious mission and the investment goals should be in line. One might think that religious based investors are irrational but practice show that religious based investors are the most rational and ethical. 3IG tries to bring about a sense of urgency by combining religion with sustainable investment. The

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force of spirituality combined with sustainability really is a force which can move mountains. It's not enough to say: God is great. There's also a moral responsibility.

**Paul Kloppenborg**, Global Cleantech Capital

We have to channel investment funds to where money can be used best. The Tällberg Foundation is a forum where strength of different players can come together. For Mr. Kloppenborg the Tällberg Foundation is a source of inspiration. It also enables different modus operandi to meet: NGOs, politicians and people out of the financial world.

**Paul Baan**, Noaber Foundation

There is a world beyond money; Businesses, civil society, churches. How to create impact as a small foundation? For the theme of living together (noaber) you need something in common. You have to talk to each other to understand each other. We need business, social rules, social venturing as ways to bridge the gaps that exist within our society. The question for us now is how we can scale up the successful machine of social venturing. Many people think of profit only; but well-being of our kids will be based on more than that: people, planet and profit.

**Amber Nystrom**, Tendris

Amber Nystrom, speaking about the Tällberg New Leaders Programme, tells the audience that new leadership means three things: Living with passion, Acting with purpose and Believing in real possibilities. Ms. Nystrom wants to send out a strong signal: Believe in possibilities! She illustrates her statement with a story about a friend developing a crazy idea into a worldwide day of peace, supported by the United Nations. We need new leaders that have passion and that dare to act. New leadership is addictive and powerful.

**Question to Bo Ekman and Alexander Crawford** (Tällberg Foundation)

**Question:** Why is the theme of negotiations at the centre of the Tällberg Forum 2008? Isn't Bali enough?

Mr. Ekman: The climate conference at Bali tried to agree upon how they go to negotiate in the coming years. However, the main party is not at the table, namely nature itself. That is why for the Tällberg Conference 2008 we created a table where the earth and nature is the table and thus nature sits at the table.

Bali will probably succeed in a roadmap till beginning 2009, but Bali will probably fail for the following reasons:

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1. We people do not work/think as nature
2. We try to impose on nature our rationality
3. We do not trust each other; we all have a backup plan. We all have plan B to make sure we will not become losers in the power game.
4. Logic of induction. No international agreement has been lived to the letter. There is no enforcement, police and legal system to implement the rules made. This allows us to cheat.

A “Plan C” is necessary: We should find the necessary practical solutions and create a new stage of market economy. We should act as if we are in a true sense of immergence.

**Question:** We see the Tällberg Foundation moving towards activism. Is the foundation recommending strategies?

**Mr. Crawford:** The Tällberg Foundation has always been a radar looking in the future, and many ideas have been developed and refined at Tällberg gatherings. We now face the challenge of sustainability, so we need to design a process. And all stakeholders need to be involved. We must not forget to also use the energy of the youth, since the young face the challenge to mover the elderly in the right direction.