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Energy, Development and Global Climate Change: A Brief Reflection

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Humanity, throughout its history, has always been linked to the use of energy in its various forms, which has shaped and continues to shape our society as well as our relationship with the environment. As we develop, we become more and more distant from nature. Thanks to our eagerness for “economic development” and wealth creation (for some), we are becoming more and more dependent on energy. As a result, we have exponentially increased the use of fossil fuels over the last 250 years and generated more gases that contribute to the intensification of the greenhouse effect. As a consequence, we are increasing the average temperature of the planet, we are extrapolating many biophysical limits of the Earth and generating a global climate change (GCM) unprecedented in human history.

We are under an imminent risk created by ourselves, as quoted in the opening speech of the COP27 given by the Secretary General of the United Nations, António Guterres: “we are on a road on the way to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator”. The risk is even greater for the planet’s poorest populations. Solving the climate problem cannot wait. GCM is a complex problem.

As such, it is not possible to solve it in a simplistic way from a Cartesian and Newtonian view only. I understand that the model of society coined after the industrial revolution brought us here with its rewards, but also with its burdens.

Now, our challenge is to seek solutions from a more systemic perspective, carried out through the cooperation of all and that really takes into account social and environmental issues in a more serious and effective way. As such, it isn’t possible to solve it in a simplistic way from a Cartesian and Newtonian view only by the economic and political sector. GCM is like a train at high speed and for its stop the deceleration is slow, but we have to stop it as soon as possible. So, our challenge is to seek solutions from a more systemic point of view, carried out through the cooperation of all and that really takes into account social and environmental issues in a more serious and effective way.

I’m an optimist, but we need lucidity. But, as an excerpt from a song by Brazilian musician Humberto Gessinger says: “but the dream of changing the world at least changes the dreamer”.

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