

English - AGRFOR

The regeneration of soil is at the same time a regeneration of Man and Society. Without this regeneration, it is difficult to think about a sustainable development, which requires the proper management of all primary resources (water, soil, animal and plant resources). In this area, Developed Countries have a huge debt to Africa and - to repair this due- an important role is recovered by a renewed industry, friend of nature and civilization.

Presentation of 'AGRFOR'

The Agrfor (Agronomy and Forestry Without Boundaries- AFWD) is a professional non-profit organization founded by a group of Italian, Africans and other nationalities, agronomists and foresters, strongly interested in development issues, in particular those in sub-Saharan Africa.

Members dell'Agrfor are independent experts who have extensive and professional experience in the field of agriculture and rural development in arid and semi-arid regions of the planet, especially with regard to Sahel.

In this context, Agrfor is faced with environmental topics and, with the aim of advancing socio-cultural debate, involved to acquire an increasing importance in the development debate. These issues include the integrated management of human and natural resources and the natural, the fight against desertification, hunger, poverty and the implementation of a participatory and sustainable economic development.

Africa: comparing two philosophies

Since the very beginning, in the field of agriculture and rural development, cooperation with African Countries has been carried out comparing two different schools of thought, technocratic-engineering the first and biological-naturalistic the second.

Experts dell'Agrfor, most agronomists, have always advocated the importance and priority of the disciplines related to land and soil, seen as the main foundation of agriculture, development and civilization.

Contrary to these options - certainly more reliable and secure - the role of these disciplines has been marginalized and penalized by powerful lobbies of development, politically stronger, but lacking in training and sensitivity necessary to promote agricultural and rural development and to recognize the fragility of the foundations upon which our civilization rests.

Despite the negative experiences of the past - which date goes back to colonial times (see irrigation perimeters, such as the Office du Niger and many other examples like that) - the technocratic options, based on Agricultural Engineering, approached the frame on the great irrigation works and the green revolution, without a precise relationship with the realities of the land and the people concerned.

Consequently, the lobbyist interests have once again prevailed over those agricultural, based on the realities (as well as the archetypal process of development, historical and anthropological) and on the conservation of soil and water, the proper management of resources, the balance of eco-systems and social structure.

In this kind of "Original Sin" of Development Cooperation, which secured an advantageous position to corporate interests remaining incapable of solving the problems of the concerned Countries, has yet to place a sufficient remedy, with negative results that can be observed still today.

Past experience and future prospects

The time of the "Sorcerer's Apprentice of Development" (1) at the end is coming anyway. It has produced a pattern of destructive development, based on an insufficient human resources and uncontrolled consumption of natural resources.

The most serious and far-sighted objections were quickly put to rest, and technocratic approach-pursued as the only possible - have been wrong not only economically, but also politically and socially disastrous.

Moreover, in Africa, in addition to the corruption of the ruling classes, a biased approach produced a serious dependency of assisted countries, especially in the agro-food, and a series of negative consequences ranging from the abandonment of traditional agriculture to the family socio-cultural destabilization (destruction of primary resources, social disruption, urbanization, poverty, population explosion, hunger, disease and uncontrolled migration).

From a certain point, this "anomaly wild", daughter of a culture unique and misunderstood (actually a real anti-culture), did believe in the manipulation of nature at will.

The "Original Sin" of pride made forget all reasonable precautions (as well as the existence of an upper body), and consider only the major products of 'human ingenuity - or technology - as a means of development (2) .

For this reason, the environmental and socio-cultural issues were neglected and undervalued by many people in development cooperation.

Without a humanistic culture - the only truly worthy of the name - the barbarism is always around the corner, and the days are not enough to avoid new tragedies, which can be more serious than in the past.

To overcome the ongoing tragedies and prevent future ones, an ethical and humanistic mindful approach is based on the fact that development is made for man, and not by "progress" inhuman and unanimated.

Of course, this is not to blame technology, which remains an essential factor of development, but is to condemn the misuse made of it - by the lure of gain and power.

This is the reason why, William Vogt, already in the 50s of last century, observed how "in the correct use of technology, there is immense potential for the liberation of man, in his misuse (or inappropriate), there is instead an immense capacity for enslavement, degradation and environmental destruction and socio-cultural. "

With a balanced and intelligent technology - measured on Man and Nature - is possible to get the maximum results with minimum effort, which is the real secret of development, based primarily on human resource development.

Given the importance of the stakes and the relative simplicity of the problems to be solved by adopting the right solutions, it is clear by now that many of the options pursued so far - especially in rural areas - is incompatible with the environmental and socio-cultural development of countries in developing countries (DCs).

Rather than seek technological solutions "advanced", but ethically questionable (not to mention the risks are always possible), it is therefore necessary to address and solve main problems, such as management of energy resources and climate change, adopting those solutions super-tested - suggested by the nature and history - which are more suited to the context of reference.

Finally, to leave false and dangerous suggestions and come back down to earth, we are still bound to this Earth.

It is not without significance that is above the Earth - understood both as a planet and as

agricultural land - where we should re-start to regain confidence and move towards the future.

A future and a peaceful and creative development

Having done their time, technocratic fundamentalism and ethical relativism - intricately intertwined - have now written down the value of a commodity or a currency out of circulation.

Parallel changes run in the course of history, economics and society.

We therefore need to understand - the sooner the better - that technical development and socio-economic can not be separated from a balanced progress on the cultural, ethical and spiritual.

This because the Universe, Nature and Man are - such as the development and how life itself - complex and multi-dimensional reality, which means we must learn to know, to follow up and pursue.

Recalling the words of Paul VI in 'Encyclical Populorum Progressio, " Development is the new name for peace, there now seems necessary to recognize that Peace is the new name of development.

But this is a new kind of peace, among men and with nature, and a new style of development - creative and destructive - of a "cultural renaissance" indispensable (3) and open to all in the name of a common humanity, that will still fierce opposition from those who - having based their choices on misleading and deceptive- are more likely to divide than to unite, more to destroy than to build.

Agrfor wishes to make a real contribution to sustainable, harmonious and creative development, focusing its attention on a true "Culture of Development", as well as on agricultural and rural development in Africa and its human inhabitants.

(1) Definition of Serge Michailof "Apprentis Les sorciers du développement" - mythes technocratiques rural face à la pauvre - Ed Economy (Paris, 1987), with a preface by Edgar Pisani

(2) The image of Achilles and the tortoise illustrates the relationship between the "science laboratory" (or specialized) and vital processes, such as the degradation of agricultural soils. To see how quickly the progress of this science, soil degradation that is not pointless, aggravating the situation of departure and the organoleptic quality of food products. This is because many phenomena of life - as opposed to purely physical - are so complex as to escape largely to scientific (laboratory). They may therefore be better addressed and resolved with a 'pragmatic and experimental approach.

(3) The "discovery" of ecology - the mother of all sciences - leads inevitably to a cultural and ethical revolution and the rediscovery of God, the Creator and Legislator of Nature.