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Summary: 84 words for 100 words

Over the past few years, food and energetic prices have experienced a dramatic drop, together with important social progresses, international security issues and a current slowdown of worldwide economic growth. The exponential growth of worldwide population is not sustainably possible as the earth has some physical, biological and ecological limits. Developing the economy by following the economical theory of compared advantages does not necessarily result in higher levels of well-being. Therefore what directions should the economy take to promote well-being? What options may we contemplate?

Essay: 937 words for 1000 words

Our western modern society has achieved a high standard of living over the past decades. It is time to be careful that a singular focus on economic efficiency does not destroy the real sources of well-being in our society. As an ongoing process, a sustainable development requires the involvement of everyone: a strong government leadership, active citizens, innovative institutions and committed corporations. It includes three main criteria: environmental stewardship, social concerns and economic viability into all our decision-making. It sets out three new directions: producing, consuming and organizing ourselves differently.

A concerted macroeconomic policy action plan is required to face to the current crisis. Numerous industries nations as well as the emerging market economies or the main oil exporters could help through expansionary domestic fiscal and monetary policies. However, the World Trade Organization does not allow an equality between the different stakeholders anymore and the principles of free-exchange are only theoretical since the lowering of tariffs imposed to Southern Countries is not respected by the U.S and Europe. So why should they kept? A weaker addiction to international financial help, especially the one given by the International Monetary Fund is desirable. Indeed, developing countries have a strong reliance on basic goods importations as they produce first to the benefit of Europe and U.S markets. They should be able to use their sovereignty power to protect themselves.

In addition, both financial regulation and the international reserve system have to be reviewed. Policy makers need to pay more attention to the dramatic potential effects of financial exuberance by limiting speculation in the commodities and energies future markets, which participate to the current crisis. An accurate legislation must be quickly founded to change the rules of the game.

A multilateral financial system should be implemented to create equal conditions for all stakeholders and avoid unfair competition as well as exchange-rate adjustments to the detriment of developing countries.

Major policies reforms are required in developed and developing countries to achieve a sustainable solution. First, agricultural subsidies in western economies should be abandoned; secondly, investing in the modernization and productivity of existing agricultural production systems is a high priority. In other terms, it requires investments in water supply, infrastructure and agricultural research. Deploying existing technologies could be made possible by implementing private and public partnerships. Another idea consists in reorienting the production and consumption towards a vegetable proteins based food. It would allow reducing the required agricultural lands for production to the difference of our current food consumption's model (animal proteins based food). This point is all the more important that China and India tend to adopt western purchasing behaviours. This constitutes a real opportunity and should be seriously considered inasmuch as it would not lead to a growing dependence of farmers towards global corporation as GMO use could do, with their strong reliance on annual seed repurchasing for having crops to grow and sell. In addition, this would make sense with the growing consumers' choice for green, healthy, locally produced, energy-sufficient and eco-friendly products. Organic food and farmers markets need to be encouraged by preferential loans or specific helps from governments to farmers.

Far from requiring investments in bio-fuel energy, the regulation of energetic crisis implies first of all saving energy and not entering in concurrence with food production to the detriment of developing countries. Substitution behaviors such as reducing consumption or recycling products must be generalized to limit our reliance on the use of raw material. One of the biggest savings in energy could be made by making an appeal to traditionally produced food from small farmers. By confining in the soil enormous amounts of greenhouse gases, organic and local farms dramatically reduce energy use in the agricultural sector. Energy savings require new life styles, new consumption patterns and a reorganization of space. Until now, the whole organisation and cohesion of our society has been based on the massive availability of oil. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the gas, coal, nuclear, hydro, wind or solar energies can not currently make up for the shortage of oil. In other terms, in a near future, short distances will become fundamental, whether it is for social life, food supply, commuting, trade or industry.

Simple solutions for a common life could already be adopted by following the example of urban areas such as

Amsterdam or Copenhagen, where public transports and bikes are preferred to cars, and by applying solutions for intelligent buildings. We should tackle the issue of energy waste by rewarding businesses and households that reduce their consumption and recycle materials. A strong commitment to public control over all resources essential to life, whether it is food, water or energy, could pave the way towards a more sustainable society. For instance, it would mean creating a public energy corporation in order to manage our resources sustainably, to create economic opportunities for people and to protect our natural environment.

Climate change in particular poses a threat to our development model and demands immediate and far-reaching measures to be taken by governments. We need to start moving towards a system of taxing environmentally poor behaviours, such as fossil fuels. Increased public spending on measures to improve well-being could easily be financed by cutting business and middle-class welfare and cracking down on tax avoidance. Economy has to be converted with an objective of respecting perpetual resources and resistant technologies.

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