

LYON DECLARATION

WHEN GLOBALIZATION DRIVES US MAD TOWARD AN ECOLOGY OF SOCIAL BONDS

We, signing this declaration, meeting in the conference of the five continents on the effects of globalization on mental health, call for an immediate and necessary recognition of the globalisation psychosocial effects and of the principles and consequences deriving from them.

Recalling the principles of the 1978 Declaration of Alma Ata and of the 1986 Ottawa Charter,

Agreeing with the recent Rio Political Declaration (21st October 2011) on Social Determinants of Health,

We would like to focus on the Lyon Declaration specificity: to promote the Ecology of Social Bonds in the context of Globalization.

1 - GLOSSARY AS A PREAMBLE

A few key-words have to be clarified to avoid misunderstanding, specifically: globalization, psychosocial, mental health, precarity, suffering, and the ecology of social bonds.

1-1 Globalization associates two different and entangled processes:

- First, globalization results from a continued process of increasing human, information and commercial exchanges across physical and political frontiers. Cultural exchanges have grown markedly since the mid-1980s with the information and communication technologies revolution to the point of creating a “worldwide village” where everyone is “a neighbour”. These technologies have expanded the volume and pace of interactions; hence the emergence of a global awareness which includes demands for enhanced governance and better transparency. A global citizenship is emerging that supports solidarity: this is a hazardous but vital challenge to take up although there is a risk it may be ineffectual.

- The meaning of globalization noted above, however, must be distinguished from its use to describe the worldwide extension of the capitalist market economy focused on individual profit. This trend has emerged at the end of the XIX^o century and has accelerated with the post WWII process of economic liberalization and deregulation. The market is deemed to be rational and the state is to keep its intervention to a minimum. The underlying ideology is that individual initiative drives the success or failure of the nations’s economy. In this ideology, there are two significant disconnections: explicitly the economic sphere from the political one, and the financial sphere from the economic one. As a result, there is no concern about environmental and social consequences. Today, Hyperfinance rules the world and uncontrolled greed is the engine of growth.

- These two processes of globalization have psychosocial effects which can be considered as beneficial or harmful to mental health.

1-2 Psychosocial effects: the term *psychosocial* connotes the indissoluble interaction between what belongs to the subject and what belongs to social life. It captures the effects of contexts, including those of globalisation, that simultaneously influence the individual and the social bonds. The favourable or unfavourable effects on mental health are the central point of the Lyon Declaration.

1-3 Mental Health: psychosocial effects are necessarily linked to every person's mental health, particularly within an increasingly individualistic society, both in its positive and negative aspects. It is not limited to preventing and managing mental disorders usually treated by psychiatry, which nevertheless remains essential; nor is it limited to promoting the rights of disabled persons, which also remains essential; but it includes the psychosocial effects due to globalisation on all world citizens, in the various aspects of their life. Globalization requires a systemic and global approach to mental health which should take into account differences between countries, regions, religions and cultures.

1-4 The word *precarity* is most of the time used in its negative sense as a synonym of uncertainty, risk of catastrophe, poverty, etc...However, it is interesting to evoke the fact that, in latin origin languages, precarity stems from the latin *precari* which means: *to depend on others, to obtain by prayer*.

In this sense, the state of precarity is both antagonistic and complementary to individual autonomy. Like for autonomy, dependency has to be respected. It is true from infancy to old age. Illness, trauma and others states of debility increase the level of precarity, which simply and positively means: *the absolute need of the other, of the others, to live*. From this standpoint, one might speak of a "healthy precarity" defined as the social support that is needed at every stage of life, in a shared and reciprocal fashion.

Beyond the useful concept of vulnerability, that of precarity has the valuable merit, in this individualistic era, to include the other, the others, in its own definition.

1-5 Suffering: situations of precarity are necessarily ambivalent in the way they produce safety and pleasure as well as their opposites. That is why suffering is part of the human reality

It can appear on the social scene or remain inward; it increases when the trust conditions are attacked. How we deal with suffering is fundamental.

1-6 The ecology of social bonds is the Lyon Declaration main focus: why save the planet if humans disappear as social beings? Today, social life of human beings becomes the issue at stake. The orientation of the conference of the five continents and of this concluding declaration is to carefully examine how negative aspects of globalisation put at risk ordinary situations of precarity in polluting the concrete modalities of social bonds. The aim is to address "*conditions damaging to health at all levels*" (Political Rio Declaration, 8) and to derive the practical steps to favour viable and sustainable effects in terms of human ecology.

2 - DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLE

2-1 Human beings, free and equal in right, are born and remain precarious all their life long insofar as they are absolutely in need of others to live.

2-2 This native precarity is the driving force to interhuman bonds; it is essential to keeping humans alive and is antagonistic to the exclusion process.

2-3 This native precarity should not be identified by its only negative meanings (cf.1-4). It must not be equated to poverty, although it is very often associated with it.

2-4 The conditions which keep and favor reliable human bonds constitute the foundation of a healthy precarity; they concern every person responsible on a social, economic and political level. These conditions, implying justice and equity, strengthen the personal feeling of mastering a future in which everyone can take part.

2-5 Neglecting these conditions is as harmful to the individual and to society as those concerning attacks against freedom and security. It does violence to the human person. Violence does not necessarily mean only fierce cruelty, as torture for instance; cold cruelties are becoming more and more important and can be qualified as social contempt, disqualification and exclusion.

2-6 Social, economic and political contexts are prone to massively switch human bonds to unreliability and mistrust, leading to a negative precarity, with psychosocial effects prejudicial to mental health.

These negative effects *are focused on the loss of confidence* in oneself, in one's family, in others and in the future. These effects could be described in various ways, for instance termed as depression, withdrawal, individualistic atomization, social paranoia, along with a fading of any future project but a catastrophic one.

2-7 Thus, respecting social bonds ecology is totally part of the social determinants of mental health. It must be viewed in a systemic and global approach.

2-8 Visioned that way, a "good enough» mental health can be defined as follows:

- The capacity to live with oneself and with others, in the search for pleasure, happiness and a meaningful life.
- In a given but not immutable environment, that is to say transformable thanks to the activity of individuals and human groups.
- Without destruction but not without revolt, that is the capacity to say "NO" to what goes against the needs of individual and social life, which allows a true "YES".
- Implying the capacity to suffer whilst remaining alive, connected with oneself and with others.

2-9 At this precise moment of our history, the context is that of globalization. One has to state that this context has a strong potentiality to make humans profoundly disturbed, madly anxious and insecure about the reliability of their social bonds. It affects the symbolic foundations of cultures and individuals. It affects as well the very notion of future and meaningful projects. Because of that, it is antagonistic to Human Rights.

3 - RECOMMENDATIONS

We, signing this declaration, meeting in the conference of the five continents on the effects of globalization on mental health, pluridisciplinary experts in mental health as well as world citizens:

3-1 Recommend that the importance of a **Public Health** approach integrating psychosocial effects linked to social, economical and political contexts should be recognized, within the scope of concrete and interdependent mental health practices and respectful of personal dignity.

3-2 Insist on **the responsibility** of all those who, at different levels, are in charge of a human ecology positively founded on a healthy precarity of human bonds; this is as vital as the air we breathe in or the banning of torture, slavery and oppression. Those responsible must be held accountable.

3-3 Insistently recommend that the context effects should be integrated in the refounding of **a globalized and sustainable financial governance under political control**. The aim being that banks should play their supporting role in real economy, employment and technological innovation.

3-3 bis Given that **it is a principle of civilisation that there is no society without regulation**: if there is no regulation of the financial system and of the greed of those who are in power, then an excessive regulation shamefully shifts to the detriment of human beings, mainly the most vulnerable and excluded ones, by stigmatizing them, owing to the ideological principle that only the individual initiative becomes the crux of nations's wealth as well as their misfortune.

3-4 Know that, so far, there is no global public space able to objectivise measure and qualify negative psychosocial effects of globalization. We propose to establish **a perennial international network**, initiated at the congress of the five continents. The objective is to demand a vital human ecology from the economical and political decision-makers who should take into account what is favourable and unfavourable to social bonds in governance principles, laws and regulations.

To achieve this, we propose to create an **International Observatory on Globalization and Human Ecology** which will be the vector for research, exchanges and recommendations on precarity and suffering connected to the alienating effects of world "financiarisation" and "merchandisation".