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Why and for Whom Should we Care? Environmental Ethics, Responsibility and Climate Justice

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Content

1. Introduction: Challenges worldwide and in China	1
2. What is Environment and Environmental Ethics?	2
3. Anthropology: Welcome as Guests on Earth.....	2
3.1 Four major types of relationship	2
3.2 Mens position on Earth	3
3.3 Welcome as guest on earth	3
3.4 Environmental anthropology in Marxism, Confucianism, Buddhism	4
4. Responsibility, Power, Freedom, Obedience	5
5. The anthropological foundation of power and responsibility	6
6. Why should we care? Motivations for responsibility	7
7. Individual and structural ethics	8
8. Caring for the five “skins”	8
9. Climate Justice: Painful Questions.....	8
10. From Climate Change to Climate Justice	9
11. Basic Value: Justice	9
12. Some Ethical Guidelines for Climate Justice	11
13. The environmental crises as Threat and Opportunity	14

1. Introduction: Challenges worldwide and in China

Worldwide, we are confronted with air pollution in cities with serious health risks, devastating storms as a result of climate change, water pollution and dead rivers, mega-waste in megacities, deforestation and growing deserts, pick oil as a sign for limited non renewable fossil energy sources etc. The list of such environmental challenges in all parts of the world is huge.

But also the list of decisive activities in favour of environmental protection is very impressive: global programs to mitigate global warming, huge programs for energy efficiency, reforestation, solar energy, waste management, reduction of air pollution etc.

China shows a unique and most impressive development: the economic growth is higher than of most other countries, goods and services are produced for the vast market of the own

population as well as for all parts of the world, the educational system gets much attention and the intellectual production covers almost all fields. The global political importance of China is growing on all continents. The cultural heritage and the contribution of religions for daily life, for ethics and for a harmonious development of the society are rediscovered.

This fast development in China has a price as we all know. The gap between poor and rich grows. The environment is heavily under pressure. Polluted water and air are a danger for human health and animals, soil deterioration bears the risk of a decrease of agricultural productivity in future, Climate change provokes floods and storms. It costs many fold damages for human life, goods and infrastructure.

I'm impressed that president Hu Jintao at the opening of the 17th Party's Congress in October 2007 emphasised to give special attention to the care for the environment. Caring for the environment has several dimensions: Environmental *technologies* (for energy efficiency, alternative energy sources such as solar energy, agricultural technologies, housing systems, new public transport systems etc.) can make a major contribution. *Economic* incentives for environmentally sound behaviour, financial *charges* for environmental pollution and *legal* punishment for disregarding environmental laws are equally important.

But technological, economic, scientific and political measures are only successful, if our world view and our awareness are changing: What are we as human beings on earth? Are we like dictators who claim to have the right to exploit and oppress others and nature? Or do we see ourselves as part of the whole of creation, like humble guests on earth? This is a task for the education in family, new environmental curricula on all levels of education and an important role of politics and the media. The ethical foundation of environmental care lies in the anthropology, in the vision of what human beings are and what their responsibilities on earth are.

2. What is Environment and Environmental Ethics?

Different words express different world views and different relations between human and non-human beings:

The word environment emphasises the world around us. Nature indicates the world which is „natural“, without human influence (but most parts of „nature“ are influenced by human activities), the word Creation includes the religious context that nature/environment are created by (God) the creator.

Morals are the actual educated values of individuals or a society.

Ethics is the critical analysis of morals in order to gain values and standards for decisions and behaviour. Ethics includes all sectors of life and all situations where a decision has to be taken (a decision normally is a conflict of values).

Environmental ethics deals with human behavior related to non-human environment and its effects on human and non human beings. It is closely linked to other areas of ethics such as economic ethics, political ethics, religious ethics, health ethics etc. Environmental ethics deals with value-based decisions in fields such as the whole chain of goods and services from raw material to production, trade, consumption and recycling in all sectors, from agriculture to Information technologies, from energy to the military, from media to the production of intellectual goods (knowledge production).

3. Anthropology: Welcome as Guests on Earth

3.1 Four major types of relationship

Four major types of relationship between human and non-human beings are described in environmental ethics:

- Anthropocentric: human being is the reference point

- Biocentric: all life (non human and human) is the reference point
- Pathocentric: the suffering of beings is the reference point
- Theocentric: The perspective and will of God (theos) is the reference point

3.2 Mens position on Earth

In the history of mankind and in the different cultures, different anthropologies dominated and competed with each other. What is the position of a human being in the whole of creation?

- A king? Free to treat nature as property? Or as good king to serve and conserve?
- A worm? Not more than any other being?
- A steward? Called to care for creation?
- A manager? Managing the Earth?
- A Killer? Struggle for the survival of the fittest (Darwin)?

3.3 Welcome as guest on earth

My proposal for the anthropological foundation of environmental ethics is the image that human beings are guests on earth. And they are welcome as such! "I am a guest on earth, we all together are guests on earth" means: As Chinese, Asians and Europeans, as Americans and Africans, as rich and poor, as socialists and capitalists, as Confucians, Christians and Buddhists, – we all are guests on earth. The wonderful natural resources are not our personal possession. They do not belong to us, but they are the common good of humanity, given by the creator and lent from future generations. We can learn this virtue of humbleness and unity with nature from traditions in East and West, many thousand years old. We then can find the right balance and harmony between human progress and conservation of nature as well as between change and sustainability. My book on Environmental Ethics – the Chinese edition will be launched during this conference - wants to contribute to rediscover these roots in the Christian faith and worldview as in philosophical and other religious traditions. "To be a guest on earth" is a common global ethic which can be found in all cultures throughout history. Key elements of this anthropology are:

- The earth is the common guesthouse, given to all living beings in order to live in dignity on it.
- Guests are invited to enjoy the gifts in the guesthouse and to use them carefully.
- Guests are asked to respect the rules and obligations in the guesthouse.
- Guests should leave the guesthouse in a way that the next guests (future generations) can enjoy the same or similar gifts.
- The guests borrow (rent) the guesthouse, they are not the proprietors!

To be a guest on earth is an important image of mankind in the Christian world-view as in many religions and cultures. All religions see human beings in a relation to the "other world", a transcendent world which is linked to the visible world. The human beings try to behave in the light of the transcendent world. In Religions with God as a "person" – Judaism, Christianity, Islam, in a way Hinduism and traditional religions, the relationship between God and human being can be described as the relationship between the host and the guest:

- God the creator offers the Earth as his guesthouse. He himself is the host.
- Human beings together with all creatures (!) are no longer enemies on earth, but invited and welcome as guests.
- God in Jesus Christ invites all people to be his guests, to sit at his table and to build one community (humankind). Especially the Gospel of Luke underlines this perspective.

The consequence of this anthropology is a new view of the earth! The Earth is not the possession of individuals, communities or nations. The earth is the common house (=„oikos“, eco-, in Greek) of humankind. Human responsibility in this house has three dimensions:

- Economy (oikos nomos): responsible production of goods and services.
- Ecology (oikos logos): responsible use of natural resources.
- Ecumenism (oikoumene, the whole inhabited earth): responsible community of different religions and world views.

All three dimensions belong together and are interdependent. Economy can only be long term sustainable if the environment is protected. The economy and the ecology will only be sustainable if people with different religious convictions learn to live together in mutual respect and harmony, recognizing that all are invited as guests on earth with the same rights and obligations in this wonderful guesthouse.

3.4 Environmental anthropology in Marxism, Confucianism and Buddhism

The Christian-Jewish view of being a guest on earth is not the only one which calls for caring and carefulness. The contrary is true. Most religions and philosophies include in one way or the other the notion of carefulness. But they do it in different ways and with remarkable differences in practical consequences.

In Marxism, overcoming exploitation of human beings (workers, not-owners of production means) by other human beings (owners of production means) and installing justice and equity and fair distribution between poor and rich was and is the great vision of Marxism and Socialism. But Marx like the Christian and Jewish theologians of his time limited his vision to human beings. Marxist environmental ethics therefore has to extend the struggle for justice to the broader dimension of environmental justice which means to stop rude exploitation of nonhuman beings and of natural resources.

In Confucianism, the virtues of *respect*, *benevolence* (Ren) and *mutual benefit* (Pingdeng Huli?) are deeply rooted and influence the Chinese society. They are one foundation for harmonious relations between human beings, in family, business and nation, with fairness as reciprocity, with coexistence and respecting the middle way of harmony. This wonderful teaching has only to be enlarged from human relations to relations with the whole creation. If fairness, respect and harmony become the fundamental values in the relation to soil, natural resources, air, forests and water, then environmental ethics becomes a Confucian face.

In Buddhism, the wonderful concept of “ahimsa” (*carefulness*, mindfulness, non-violence) is a core value and attitude in Buddhist environmental ethics. Karuna (sym-pathy, em-pathy) with all creatures is the most important virtue in Buddhism, because it is the virtue of Buddha. Buddhists have always been strong in caring for creation. But they often did it in an individualistic way, not taking into account the structural, economic and political reasons for environmental destruction.

The problem of all world religions, of philosophies as of the global world views such as capitalism and Marxism is that they often denied and neglected environmental concerns, blind from the industrial and technical progress of the 19th and 20th century. They all must not deny their core message and values – be it respect, non-violence, justice, carefulness, but they all have to enlarge these values from the human sphere to the whole creation.

But as a sign of hope, all of them – not at all in the same speed, clarity and decisiveness! – rediscovered and still have to rediscover the broader community of creatures which includes not only human beings, but the whole creation. Confucian, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, Marxist and Capitalist environmental ethics have been developed during the last thirty years. They all are needed and have to join hands in order to overcome the huge environmental challenges such as climate change, which threatens humanity and the earth as our common house.

4. Responsibility, Power, Freedom, Obedience

As guests on earth caring for creation and therefore caring for human beings in need, has much to do with responsibility. Environmental ethics is ethics of responsibility. Let us therefore develop the dimensions and content of the value "responsibility" related to environmental concerns.

The word responsibility is composed of two words:

- „Spondere“ (Latin) means to promise, to offer, to commit, to sign a contract (in the theological perspective: God offers his earth, he commits it to humankind).
- „Re-spondere“ (Latin) means to respond, to answer to this offer by responsible behaviour / responsible use of this offer. In non-faith based world views, it means: respond to rationality, respond to the wisdom of the forefathers, respond to the needs of suffering people/nature etc.

The condition for responsibility is the power to decide and the power to act. We therefore have to start the reflection about responsibility by the reflection about power.

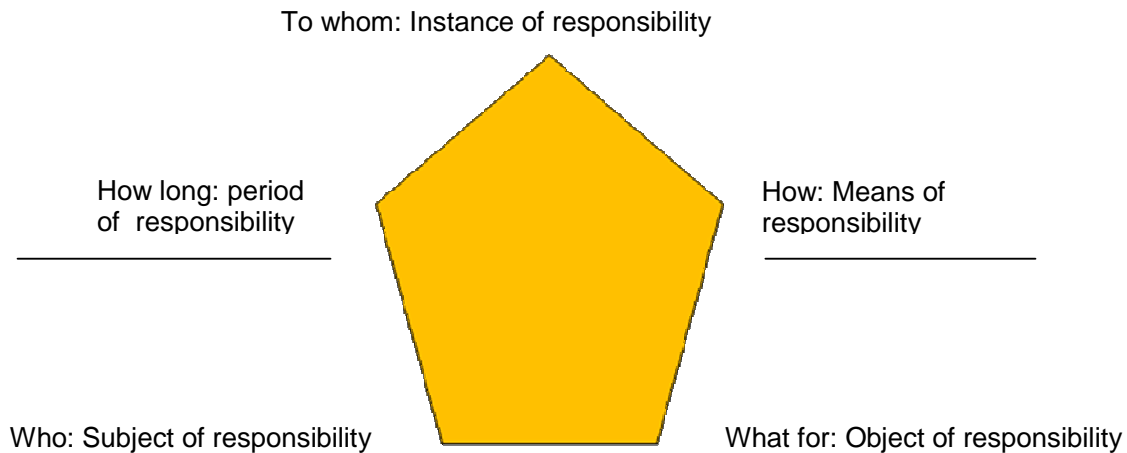
Power is the ability to decide between one or different options and to implement the decision. Therefore each person has a certain amount of power, from very little to very extensive, from power only about oneself to influencing and directing millions of people. Different forms of power can be distinguished: competence (technical and social competence), capital (money, in general material possessions), communication and information (very important in the modern information society), experience (including the power of history), innovation (creative power), physical strength (physical power, arms), credibility (power of reputation), conviction (power of arguments), decision-making (power of taking and implementing decisions), monopoly (power without counter-power), cooperation (power to form coalitions), time (time and speed as an important power in modern economy) etc.

Owing to the fact that power often is abused, power tends to have a negative connotation. Can power be ethical? According to the sociologist Max Weber, power is the possibility of enforcing one's own will. As a capacity for the realisation and implementation of ethical values, power is positive; indeed, it is necessary to implement what one recognises as "good" and to avoid what one recognises as "evil".

Generally speaking responsibility¹ is the response to power. Responsibility means the responsible use of power in its different forms. In ethical terms the level of responsibility is inextricably linked to the level of power. The more power a person has, the greater is his or her responsibility. Somebody who has no power, cannot assume responsibility, and anybody who exercises power without responsibility, abuses it. A newborn baby cannot as yet be held responsible, because it has not the will and the skills to decide between options. In contrast, a father of a family, an entrepreneur or the president of a government, have the responsibility to use their power for the benefit of the people entrusted. An excellent speaker has the responsibility to use his/her eloquence and argumentations in a way, which empowers and supports, but not oppresses people.

Responsibility includes five questions: *Who is responsible what for to whom for how long and with which means?* The five dimensions are: The subject of responsibility (who), the object of responsibility (what for), the instance of responsibility (to whom), the period of responsibility (how long?) and the means of responsibility (which means?)

¹ More on this fundamental value see: Jonas, Hans (1979): *Das Prinzip Verantwortung*, München: Piper 1979; Stückelberger, Christoph/ Mathwig, Frank (2007): *Grundwerte. Eine theologisch-ethische Perspektive*, Zürich: TVZ, 121-143 (chapter 3.3 on responsibility).



Responsibility, Power, Freedom and Obedience are linked:

The more freedom (of decision) one has, the greater is the responsibility.

The less freedom (of decision) one has, the smaller is the responsibility.

The more power one has, the greater is the responsibility.

The less power one has, the smaller is the responsibility.

Freedom includes the free decision to obey to rules as part of responsibility. In specific cases responsibility includes to disobey/resist if the rules and the rulers violate or contradict environmental values and standards.

5. The anthropological foundation of power and responsibility

The understanding of power and responsibility depends to a great extent on the image of man one has. With a pessimist view, one emphasises that man is always in danger to abuse power and to neglect his or her responsibility. The weakness and sinfulness of human beings leads to the necessity to control power of each human being by techniques of sharing and limiting. To control, share and limit power is the most important way for a responsible use of power. With an optimistic image of man one sees the opportunity of persons to assume responsibility by self-education and self-discipline. Based on the ability for self-responsibility, the control and sharing of power is seen as less necessary.

In the perspective of Christian anthropology and ethics, power and responsibility are rooted in God and are derived from him. According to the theological definition of the Ecumenical Council of Churches, power represents man's ability to participate in God's creation. Therefore, the question is not to accumulate as much power as possible, but to dispose of the power that is appropriate for the task and the objectives at every level of action. In the Christian perspective, power is given by God and taken away by God in case of abuse as it is shown in many biblical stories, especially about the kings in the Old Testament. Therefore, to share and to limit power is a valid, important way to avoid its abuse. Power is a loan in the service of the community. The measure of responsibility must be adequate to the measure of power invested in a person or institution, and vice versa. Not only power, but also the burden of responsibilities has to be shared. If it is not shared, people tend to become selfish, autocratic or they feel responsible for everything, even for matters they are unable to influence, and this is almost as destructive as undivided power. Power is tamed by responsibility toward an authority that is above the holder of the power, thereby putting power at the service of humanity. Conversely, it is irresponsible to demand responsibility from somebody without granting him or her the corresponding power.

6. Why should we care? Motivations for responsibility

The motivation for responsible behaviour differs according to different world views and value systems. In a globalised, pluralistic world and a global economy, the motivations are often mixed. This must not necessarily lead to value clashes or to a clash of civilisations, but may result in highly responsible cooperations. Manifold examples of companies with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) show evidence for this, even if the concepts of CSR still remain very debated and different.²

From an enlightened perspective, responsible behaviour is a result of enlightened self-interest. Rational behaviour includes responsibility because irresponsible behaviour is self-destructive and violates the duties toward the community.³ Self interest and interest of others can be combined and reconciled. Social peace and a healthy environment are equally good for others as for oneself.

From a religious perspective, one has to act responsibly as a response toward God or the Deity. All power is with God and is granted to man by God. Therefore man is responsible toward God to use his power for the benefit of the community. The efforts for personal salvation, personal perfection and wholeness or (in a protestant perspective) the liberation from these efforts by God's grace lead to responsible behaviour.⁴

From a Confucian perspective, responsible behaviour is the core of the concept of *ren*, the ideal of the morale of benevolence and of humane behaviour for the sake of humanity. All human relations in its orders and its respects are basically rooted in hierarchical and concurrent mutual responsibility. In this context the motivation for responsibility is to maintain long-term and stable human relationships and friendships.⁵

From a communitarian perspective, the motivation for responsible behaviour results from community-orientation. The wellbeing of the community is the goal of human action. Individual wellbeing depends on wellbeing of the community.⁶

From a human rights perspective, the care for others and the support of their the human rights is an important responsibility of policy makers. But it is also the responsibility of everybody. Obviously, rights are linked to duties and responsibilities.⁷

From a liberal perspective, personal freedom finds its limitation at the freedom of other fellow human beings. In order to guarantee freedom in the long run, freedom must be linked with responsibility, which respects the freedom of others.⁸

From a socialist perspective, the struggle for justice and equity between all human beings leads to the call for responsibility. Irresponsible use or abuse of power oppresses the poor and weakens the weak. To care for others is a commandment of solidarity.⁹

² See Enderle, Georges (2006): *Corporate Responsibility in the CSR Debate*, in: Wieland Josef u.a. (eds.): *Unternehmensethik im Spannungsfeld der Kulturen und Religionen*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 108-124.

³ Ulrich, Peter (1997): *Integrative Wirtschaftsethik. Grundlagen einer lebensdienlichen Ökonomie*, Bern: Haupt Verlag.

⁴ Stückelberger, Christoph (2007): *Stewards and 'Careholders'. A Christian Ethical Perspective*, in: Stückelberger, Christoph/ Mugambi, J.N.K.: *Responsible Leadership. Global and Contextual Ethical Perspectives*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 3-12.

⁵ Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius* (I-III).

⁶ Etzioni, Amitai (2004): *From Empire to Community*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

⁷ Runzo, Joseph et al (eds.) (2003): *Human Rights and Responsibilities in the World Religions*, Exford: One World Publications.

⁸ Stückelberger, Christoph/ Mathwig, Frank (2007): *Grundwerte. Eine theologisch-ethische Perspektive*, Zürich: TVZ, 101-120 (chapter 3.2 on freedom).

From a capitalist perspective, the goal of increasing and sustainable profit can – in the long run – only be reached by responsible behaviour. Irresponsible short term profit maximisation increases conflicts with stakeholders, results in negative media reports, legal court cases, and environmental damage, thereby leading to various reputation risks and to corresponding financial damage.¹⁰

7. Individual and structural ethics

In human relations responsibility in the care for oneself and for others is an ethical category. First of all, as part of individual ethics it concerns the responsibility of an individual toward others and toward his or her own life. Responsibility is not only a fundamental value, a basic ethical principle; but it is also a virtue, and a characteristic feature of personal behaviour. Second, responsibility has to be incorporated and incarnated into the structures in all sectors of the society. "Codes of Conduct", management procedures, corporate structures from planning to production, trading, reporting and recycling, the legal system of a nation, international conventions of the global or regional community or states etc. all of them should be structures, mechanisms and institutions, which allow each individual to behave in a responsible way. They all are built by managers, board members, members of parliament or governments, participants in Non-Governmental Organisations or religious communities. Individual and structural responsibility and ethics therefore are interdependent and influence each other. By itself individual behaviour generally is too weak to change the world and ethical "heroes" are rare species. On the other hand, the difficulties or ease of responsible behaviour are incorporated in social structures only if individuals and communities struggle for it.

8. Caring for the five “skins”

A holistic anthropology underlines the link between the human and the non-human. Each human being needs five levels of „skin“ to protect his/her life. These are five basic needs:

1. “skin”: the biological skin of the body
2. „skin“: the clothes
3. “skin” the housing
4. “skin“: the community
5. „skin“: the atmosphere (protects from ozon and is vital for all life on earth etc.)

To care for the fifth skin means to be responsible for climate change prevention, mitigation and adaptation. It leads to painful questions of environmental ethics.

9. Climate Justice: Painful Questions

Who dies first as a result of climate change? This question is no more theoretical as it seemed to be twenty years ago. It is a reality of life and death every day for millions of victims of droughts or storms. It is a painful question for thousands of decision makers about priorities to mitigate climate change with limited resources. And since death as a result of climate warming is not a natural disaster, but men made – in this aspect the world community reached a common view – the question becomes even more painful: Not “Who dies first” as a fate, but “Whom do we sacrifice first?” as a result of human activity or non-activity. The population of the small islands in the Pacific, whose land disappears? The children in the

⁹ Stükelberger, Christoph (2003): *Global Trade Ethics. An Overview*, Geneva: WCC Publications (available also in French, German, Chinese, 2006).

¹⁰ Leisinger, Klaus/ Schmitt, Karin M. (2003): *Corporate Ethics in a Time of Globalisation*, Sri Lanka: Sarvodaya Vishva Lekha.

slums of the megacities suffering from hunger because of high food prices? The future older people in industrialized countries infected by new kind of diseases due to climate warming? The victims of storms or broken dams?

Humanity on this globe became one global village. It is a rather romantic description of life on earth. More drastic is the image that humanity lives on the same boat and starts to push weaker participants over the railing of the boat in the sea. This picture related to global warming is probably more adequate. Human beings with some morality – as we all claim to be - do not want that other human beings die, but it nevertheless happens every day. The boat is not full and has enough space for other human beings. But where are the resources to feed them, to cure them, to protect them? Who has the will and the power to decide the fair distribution of existing and the development of new natural, financial, technical, structural and spiritual resources to deal with climate change and minimize the number of victims? Who has to pay how much for the damages caused by climate warming? Is the polluters pay principle appropriate?

The questions around climate justice are similar to those in health policy: How much should be invested in HIV/AIDS medicine? More in healing or in prevention? Why so much in this disease and so little in fighting malaria? Is it just and justified to spend 1000 Swiss Francs per day for an 85 years old patient in a hospital in Switzerland, while for the same amount 100 children in Africa could be prevented from eye diseases? The encouraging increase of global funds against HIV-AIDS from one to 10 Billion USD per year within the last ten years, does it show the direction we have to go with climate related funds? Painful questions related to health, basic needs, emergencies as well as climate change.¹¹

10. From Climate Change to Climate Justice

These questions show: The central question is no more, *if* climate change will happen and if it is men made and what possible effects on health, environment, migration, politics, economy and culture will come up. The answers became quite clear after over twenty years of studies, experiences and conferences (even if further studies especially to foresee coming disasters will be welcome and necessary). Ban Ki-Moon, UN-Secretary General, emphasized during the 20th anniversary of the International Panel on Climate Change IPCC on 31 August 2008 that climate change is a great threat for the UN Millenium Development Goals.¹² *The basic ethical question today is how to invest and distribute limited resources for the threefold duty of prevention, mitigation and adaptation related to climate change in order to minimize the number of victims.* Climate change becomes a question of global climate justice.¹³

11. Basic Value: Justice

The raised questions “Who dies first?” and “Who pays how much?” are basically questions about justice. Of course, other values such as responsibility and solidarity play an important role in ethical reflections about climate change. But in this contribution on Climate Justice I concentrate on the value justice/equity.

Justice as the just and fair distribution of chances, burdens and responsibilities is a key value in all ethical systems and all societies throughout history. But its interpretation and weight compared to other values differ a lot. Let us mention a variety of **dimensions of justice** in its meaning for climate justice. *Climate Justice means just and fair instruments, decisions, actions, burden sharing and accountability for the prevention, mitigation and adaptation related to climate change.*

¹¹ ACT International, the international emergency organization of Churches, emphasized the effects of climate change on emergencies and development. See http://act-intl.org/news/dt_nr_2008/upsouthernafrica0108.html.

¹² Media, 31 August 2008.

¹³ See also Dossier: Klimawandel und Gerechtigkeit, eins Entwicklungspolitik, 17/18, 2007, I-XXIV.

1. Capability-related justice means that every person and institution has the duty to contribute solving problems on the basis of their capability. This means related to climate justice: Everybody can and should contribute according to his/her physical, economical, political, intellectual and spiritual capabilities. An economically strong person, institution, company or state has to contribute more than an economically weak person, institution, company or state to solve the climate challenges.
2. Performance-related justice means that every person and institution involved in human activities (such as the production, trade, sale or disposal of a product or service) must be given their due (e.g. salary) on the basis of their performance. This means related to climate justice: An activity which reduces greenhouse gas emissions is a good performance and should be rewarded respectively.
3. Needs-related justice means that basic human needs and rights (i.e. the subsistence minimum, a life in dignity and the right to food and water) should be taken into consideration for every person and institution. This means related to climate justice: Every person has the right to survive and be supported to manage adaptation to climate change independent from his/her capability and performance.
4. Distributive justice ensures that access to resources, goods and services is distributed fairly, taking into account the balance of capability, performance and needs. This means related to climate justice: Financial or other resources to decrease negative effects of climate warming on human life should be distributed first according to needs, but also taking into account performance and capabilities so that the overall disparity between people becomes smaller and not larger.
5. Justice as equal treatment means that all human beings have the same human rights and the right to equal treatment independent of capabilities, performance, needs, origin and characteristics (such as gender, colour, race, religion). This means related to climate justice: Climate related measures for prevention, mitigation and adaptation have to respect equal treatment of all people affected.
6. Intergenerational justice means a sustainable use and fair distribution of resources, as well as a reduction in and a fair distribution of ecological burdens between generations living today and future generations. This means related to climate justice: Decisions have to respect the needs for a life in dignity of future generations which have the same right of equal treatment as generations living today.
7. Participatory justice means the fair, appropriate participation in decision-making of all those affected by a problem and by decisions. This means related to climate justice: Decisions on climate related policies should be taken by democratic participation of the population and its representatives on the different levels, from local to global.
8. Procedural justice means calculable, constitutional (publicly and privately) regulated, transparent, corruption-free and thus fair procedures in all interactions. This means related to climate justice: The decisions related to climate warming and its implementations (such as access to financial resources, climate related taxes or incentives, media information) have to follow the mentioned criteria of procedural justice.
9. Functional justice means a fair and optimal relation between needs of persons and structural necessities of institutions, processes and resources. It is a question of functional justice, where, when and to whom to allocate how much and which kind of resources. This means related to climate justice: Functional and organisational aspects of allocation and distribution of limited resources is key for a fair solution of climate challenges.
10. Punitive Justice means the punishment of actions which violate justice. The goal is retaliation, deterrent or overcoming of existing injustice. This means related to climate justice: Where climate justice is violated – and this violation is ethically as severe as other injustices - , measures of punitive justice have to be taken into account as for other injustices.

11. Transitional justice means a provisional justice in transformation societies where ordinary, regular institutions and procedures may be absent or in reconstruction (e.g. in post war situations or after a revolutionary change of the system in a society). This means related to climate justice: in exceptional situations such as after emergencies, accelerated procedures for decisions and aid and exceptional instruments such as amnesty (which is not impunity) may be required and ethically justified.
12. Restorative Justice means a common solution of the perpetrator/s and the victim/s in order to restore justice from occurred injustice by compensation, reparation and/or reconciliation. This means related to climate justice: Climate injustice takes place daily because those who suffer most from the negative effects of climate change are not those who cause it. Decisive and courageous measures of the polluters, especially the industrialised countries, would be measures of restorative justice.
13. Transformative Justice means a process of transformation and renewal of reality towards justice, especially to overcome situations of injustice. It is a creative and ongoing process which goes beyond punitive or restorative justice. This means related to climate justice: Climate justice is not a single decision or act, but rather an ongoing process which leads to a fundamental transformation of societies in their relations, use of natural resources, distribution of goods and services and sustainable policies. Climate justice is not the result of one or the other isolated action but a holistic process of transformation.
14. On Time Justice means that justice is bound to the right time of decision and action (in German: zeitgerechte Entscheide, Zeit-Gerechtigkeit, in Greek: kairos, the right moment). If a measure is taken too late and the patient or victim dies, injustice happened and it is difficult to restore justice. This means related to climate justice: to prevent and mitigate further climate victims, measures have to be taken on time. The fast climate warming needs steps on time, now. The time factor is one of the most important to implement climate justice.

Some of these fourteen aspects of climate justice are in tension to others and it is difficult to implement all of them at the same time. The goal of the list is to be aware that climate justice is not an empty or arbitrary new slogan, but a fundamental value with concrete and challenging content.

12. Some Ethical Guidelines for Climate Justice

How can these aspects of climate justice help to find ethical guidelines for the crucial, above mentioned question: *How to invest and distribute limited resources for the threefold duty of prevention, mitigation and adaptation related to climate change in order to minimize the number of victims?*

First of all, guidelines can only indicate a general direction. For concrete decisions, the respective situation has to be analyzed and the guidelines have to be interpreted and adapted according to the concrete situation. In many situations, conflicts between values exist and need a prioritization, which can ethically be solved by preferential rules (if case A, then priority X, if case B, then priority Y). The following guidelines should help to prioritize and to solve conflicts between different values. Such conflicts are the criteria for benefit sharing, for burden sharing, for power sharing or for space sharing.¹⁴

1. *Volume of resources.* Before looking for preferential rules for the operation of limited resources for climate justice, the first effort must be to increase the overall amount of resources available. Resources available to solve a problem reflect the priority given to the problem and the ethical values behind this prioritization. Since climate change affects the whole humankind including future generations and non human beings,

¹⁴ See Stueckelberger, Christoph (1997): Umwelt und Entwicklung. Eine sozialetische Orientierung, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer Verlag, 30-33 (case study on the UNCED climate convention). Chinese Edition: Beijing, October 2008.

high priority has to be given to this challenge. The volume of resources is composed of financial resources from governments, private donations, profitable business activities, but also non financial resources such as human, organizational, intellectual and religious resources. In order to substantially increase financial resources, a global climate fund as proposed by the Swiss Government and others, is one important instrument. The taxation of CO₂ emissions reduces the emission and generates funds for mitigation and adaptation.

2. *Prevention* aims at avoiding climate victims by early actions. Prevention respects the goal to minimize the number of victims and supports intergenerational justice, i.e. to avoid future victims. It has ethically speaking a higher priority than mitigation and adaptation because it avoids instead of curing victims or minimizing its number. The measures are more efficient because the costs are lower than for mitigation and adaptation.
3. *Mitigation* aims at reducing already existing negative effects and at slowing down the development of such effects and the number of victims of climate change. There is no doubt that mitigation becomes more and more important since climate change already happens.
4. *Adaptation* aims at accepting new climate conditions and adapt the own living place (including eventual need to emigrate or accept immigration), lifestyle, production, technologies, spiritual roots, nonviolent ways of conflict management etc.). Justice related to capability, performance and needs will be re-interpreted: Capability will more and more have to include the capability to adapt to the new challenges. The capability to adapt will be rated as a better performance. The needs will include as now basic human needs, but will in addition include the need to adaptability.

Instruments for prevention, mitigation and adaption are often *interlinked*. To plant trees or to reduce CO₂ emissions by reducing fossil energy consumption, are preventive measures and help at the same time for mitigation and adaption. The danger is, that the international community invests more and more in curative measures such as emergency aid and has less and less resources for preventive measures such as long-term development cooperation and technological innovation in the service of climate prevention.

5. *The Polluters-Pay-Principle* means that the polluter has to pay the costs of the damage caused by his behavior/action. The principle is broadly accepted in environmental ethics and it is put into practice in many countries in specific areas such as waste management, but in climate responsibilities it is not yet implemented, for the obvious reason that the polluters who emit CO₂ and other climate relevant emissions, fear heavy financial burdens. The (climate related) taxes on fossil energy have to be multiplied if the principle is taken seriously.
6. *The Capability-to-Contribute-Principle* means that responsibility is not only related to the causer of pollution but also to the economic and structural capability to contribute to a solution. This capability includes not only financial payments, but also the contribution by scientific research, structural and political support, spiritual orientation and encouragement etc. Responsibility is not only related to direct causes of once action, but also once capability to solve a problem. A medical doctor in an airplane is obliged and responsible to help a patient independent of his/her relationship to him/her.

The *Responsibility and Capability Index RCI*¹⁵ is a very helpful measuring instrument, which corresponds to the Polluters-Pay-Principle as well as the Capability-to-Contribute-Principle. The RCI combines the cumulated CO₂ emissions of a country and its purchasing power parity and the distribution of wealth. The industrialized

¹⁵ It is developed as part of the Greenhouse Development Rights GDR, mainly developed in Great Britain by Development Agencies such as Christian Aid, supported by others like Bread for all/Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund in Switzerland. See www.ecoequity.org/GDRs.

countries therefore have the biggest share to pay, but developing and transition countries with purchasing power and wealthy elite are called to contribute accordingly. This country index shows a way of climate burden sharing. It is an ethically serious effort to make climate justice measurable and politically operational.

7. *The combination of positive and negative sanctions.* Justice in general as well as climate justice can be strengthened by positive sanctions (such as incentives, repayments, awards, facilitated access to services etc.) and negative sanctions (taxes and other burdens, punitive measures, court). Positive sanctions are ethically preferable, because they encourage the right behavior. But negative sanctions to establish punitive justice are often also necessary, especially to change the behavior of “black sheep” who do not react on positive sanctions. Both mechanisms presuppose that CO₂ emissions are seen as a severe, unethical misbehavior.
8. *Efficiency and Transparency* are key factors of good stewardship using limited resources. The efficient use of resources (energy, capital, organizational structures, intellectual creativity etc.) allows reducing costs, helping more people and saving more lives. It is an expression of responsibility and sustainability for future generations. Transparency supports the efficient use of limited resources by reducing corruption, abuse and wrong investments. Transparency and efficiency are important aspects of procedural justice.
9. *Market related instruments.* The international free market mechanism contributes substantially to general economic growth and to global interaction and peace. Programs like “Financing for Climate - Innovative Solutions and New Markets”¹⁶ tries to win the private sector to take climate change as business opportunity. Without private investments, climate-related funding will never be enough. But market related instruments alone could not and cannot solve three major problems and made them even more severe: poverty eradication, fair distribution and climate stabilization. Climate change today can be seen as the biggest market failure in human history.¹⁷ Can the market then be a chance to solve it? From an ethical point of view, the answer can be found in the criteria for climate justice: if and where ever the market mechanism strengthens the different above mentioned forms of climate justice, it has to be supported. If and where ever it weakens or violates the different forms of climate justice, the free market has to be replaced/accompanied by binding corrective instruments such as social and environmental laws regulating the markets. Many encouraging examples show that companies gain profit and reputation from activities to reduce climate relevant emissions¹⁸. In this ethical perspective, the trading of CO₂ certificates is one specific form of positive and negative sanctions, based on the market mechanism. As long as it really contributes to worldwide CO₂ emissions and climate justice, it is ethically positive. But if it is abused to circumvent legal restrictions in a country, to avoid reorientation of activities towards climate justice and only to get moral “purification” and indulgence, it has ethically to be refused.
10. *Care for the weakest.* “Solidarity with the victims of climate change” was the programmatic title of an important statement of the World Council of Churches in 2002.¹⁹ To care for the most vulnerable groups of people in cases of emergency corresponds to the human ethos in many cultures and especially in the Judeo-Christian value system. “The option for the poor” as formulated in the liberation theology is an expres-

¹⁶ Title of a Conference of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of the Swiss Government, the International Finance Corporation IFC and Swiss Re, 11-12 September 2008 in Zurich.

¹⁷ This is the view of the Stern Report: Stern Review on the economics of climate change, HM Treasury, UK 2006. www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews.

¹⁸ Swiss Re (2008a): Pioneering climate solutions, Zurich. Swiss Re (2008b): Corporate Responsibility Report. Committed to sustainable value creation, Zurich.

¹⁹ Solidarity with the Victims of Climate Change: reflections on the World Council of Churches' response to climate change, January and November 2002, Geneva, 25f.

sion of it. To care for the victims and the weakest among them offers a guideline for decision making also related to climate justice. But in concrete, it opens at the same time a lot of questions: Who are the victims? Who are the weakest among them? The children, women on Fidji Island who lose their agricultural land or the elderly people in a suburb of Paris dying from heat? And does justice as equal treatment not require that all people in danger get the same treatment? And since there are much more people who need support for mitigation and adaptation than actual resources are available, what are the additional selection criteria? Political preferences and calculations which is in fact often the case? Economic conditionality? Or where there is the greatest chance that empowerment of weak groups of people lead to efficient solutions and use of scarce means?

The first step is to honestly recognize that support is often not given to the weakest even if one accepts it as ethical criteria. A second step is to look for preferential rules in case that some of the above mentioned aspects of justice compete with each other. It may sound provocative: To give priority to the weakest may meet the needs-related justice, but is not in each case the most ethical decision because it does not recognize other aspects of justice. In some cases it may save more lives if priority is given to people with an efficient, well performing way to use the limited resources and therefore can then support others to survive. Therefore, *an ethical preferential rule* may say: In general, priority is given to the weakest. In case where somebody or a group of people who do not belong to the weakest, but to those who better perform and are better capable using limited resources to save more people, priority may be given to them. The justification of this preferential rule is the number of lives to be finally saved.

11. *Institutionalized solidarity*: Solidarity needs voluntary care and charity activities. Solidarity has at the same time to be implemented by binding institutionalized instruments. New forms of climate related insurances are forms of institutionalized solidarity. Drought or flood insurances for small farmers in poor countries similar to and combined with microcredit are an example for it.²⁰
12. *Emergency legislation*: The speed of climate change shows that binding measures for prevention, mitigation and adaptation have to be taken much faster than in the last twenty years. The reasons for the too slow process in the past have been the lack of political will, but also slow democratic decision making processes. In Switzerland, the parliament seeks since more than ten years a compromise for a CO₂-legislation. On-Time-Justice is crucial in order to reduce the number of victims. Emergency legislation by governments on CO₂-reduction measures may be necessary and ethically justified even if it limits the participatory justice. In emergency situations, the rights to food, water and survival have priority over the right to participation.

13. The environmental crises as Threat and Opportunity

An advertisement of Allianz Insurance said: "Climate Change is a business a) threat, b) opportunity". The private sector starts to speak about climate change not only as threat, but also as opportunity, based on human experiences that a crisis can also lead to renewal. It can motivate people, institutions and companies to do something to solve or at least reduce the problem. Companies interpret opportunities as business opportunities for new products and services. The global "Carbon Disclosure Project" CDP, a network of 315 institutional investors representing 41'000 Billion USD of assets, looks for climate related risks and chances of companies they invest in. This project is very important because it again uses economic mechanisms to redirect investments and activities in a climate-friendly direction. 77% of the 50 large Swiss Companies involved in the Survey, see climate change as a risk for their business (new regulations, reputation risks), 72% also as an opportunity for new

²⁰ See the recommendations of the Round Table on „Are the Right Risks Insured?“ at the Global Humanitarian Forum Geneva, 24 June 2008, www.ghf-ge.org.

products and services of the company, for comparative advantages in the market and for a way of differentiating themselves.²¹ A global news service specialized on climate change information for business opportunities just started in 2008.²² The limitation of this view is that it sees opportunities only from the perspectives of companies. But it is worth to reflect how climate change can be an opportunity for other sectors of society and humankind as a whole. I see at least five in addition to the business opportunities:

1. Climate change shows as never in the past how much all human beings depend on each other. It is more than the global village metaphor, it is the concrete experience of global *interdependence* and interconnectedness which is an opportunity for increased *solidarity* and mutual responsibility. The ethical golden rule (do to others what you want them to do for you) becomes even more evident.
2. Climate change shows that isolated actions are not enough, but that multilateral coordinating *global structures* and mechanisms are needed to solve the problem. Unilateral, bilateral or autonomous actions alone cannot bring mitigation and adaptation.
3. *A new lifestyle and society*²³ which is not based on fossil energy and carbon emission is possible. It needs a lot of adaptation but opens new opportunities for new lifestyles. To leave existing lifestyles and look for new ones is a inner journey which needs processes of departure, mourning and re-orientation as a psychological and spiritual process.
4. The crisis of climate change is a chance for increased *inter-religious cooperation*. Not only all sectors of societies, but also all religions are challenged. They have to find answers to burning spiritual questions related to climate change and to find ways of intensified cooperation in common actions and of raising awareness.
5. Climate change may hopefully be taken as opportunity for *deepening and renewing faith*, giving space for mourning and power for hope, expressed in new and renewed confessions of faith.²⁴

²¹ Carbon Disclosure Project 2007. Erste Umfrage in der Schweiz unter 50 Unternehmen des SMI Expanded, hg. Von Pictet and Ethos Foundation, Geneva 2007, 13, 49-51.

²² www.climatechangecorp.com. To order the newsletter: newsletters@climatechangecorp.com.

²³ See Schweizerischer Evangelischer Kirchenbund (2008): Energieethik, SEK Position 10, Bern.

²⁴ Churches formulated confessions related to globalization and economic injustice, e.g. the World Alliance of Reformed Churches with the "Accra Confession" 2004. Others ask, if Climate change will be part of new confessions: "Gehört auch der Klimawandel in ein neues Bekenntnis?" Reformierte Presse Nr. 30/31 25. Juli 008, 6-7.