

# The Club of Rome: Agenda for the End of the Century

Aurelio Peccei

(An Excerpt)

(Rome, 8-13 March, 1984)

*This is an excerpt from Aurelio Peccei's last paper, which he was still working on until 12 hours before he died on 14 March, 1984 and which he never saw in print. It was distributed to Club of Rome members in 1984 and was reprinted in Gunter Pauli's biographical portrait of Peccei<sup>1</sup>, and in a previous issue of the *Proceedings*<sup>2</sup> .. Its continued relevance is obvious. Nothing in it appears outdated in relation to other contributions to the *Proceedings*. This will introduce it to new members and remind long-standing members that it exists.*

Less than 6000 days separate us from the year 2000, which represents not only the end of a century that has seen extraordinary scientific, technological, economic, social, political and military developments, but also the end of a millennium during which mankind emerged from the Dark Ages, set its domain all over the world and its skies and became the basic factor of change in this corner of the Universe.

What will happen in these 6000 days will depend almost exclusively on what humans will do and on how and when they will do it, and is likely to modify their condition more radically than anything which occurred at any previous time. Momentous events and decisions are in fact maturing which are bound to change the course of human history.

Although the future cannot be prophesied, it is logical to expect that during these 6000 days:

- A supplementary population, almost as large as that which has accumulated during all the preceding ages up to the beginning of this century, will be added to the present one and must be accommodated on earth by the year 2000, while at the same time provisions must be made for settling many more people later on.
- The already strained relations between our species and its natural environment will continue to deteriorate and the situation must be drastically redressed before it reaches irreversible breakdown.
- Human society will grow increasingly in size, intricacy and internal connections so that, although

highly diversified, it will in reality become a tightly-woven, integrated and interdependent system spanning the entire world, requiring altogether new political philosophies, new institutions and new methods of global governance.

- New high technologies will be developed in such fields as microelectronics, genetic engineering, space, ocean deeps and materials, giving mankind even more overweening power to be used for good or ill and which will thus have a beneficial or a deleterious impact depending on whether human development manages to keep pace.
- Fateful decisions will be made on whether to continue or to stop the arms race and thus the build-up of nuclear warheads will either grow until these weapons will practically start firing by themselves or else they will be cocooned and dismantled and the presently rampant culture of violence will begin to give way to a new culture of non-violence,

In the light of all these probable evolutions, it is perhaps not beyond reason to affirm that a whole era is now on the wane and a new one is dawning, confronting humankind with a new set of extreme alternatives. These can be cataclysmic if we who live at these hinges of history are unprepared for the change, or rewarding beyond imagination if we understand the mutating realities and face up to them as the responsible protagonists of this novel phase in human venture.

<sup>1</sup> *Crusader for the Future*, by Gunter Pauli: Pergamon Press, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> CACOR *Proceedings* 1.9 (March, 1994)