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MOTION FOR RESOLUTION

declaring the need for an ecological and solidarity-based change of course to bring in “les jours heureux”¹,

presented by

Danièle OBONO, Mathilde PANOT, Jean-Luc MÉLENCHON, Clémentine AUTAIN, Ugo BERNALICIS, Éric COQUEREL, Alexis CORBIÈRE, Caroline FIAT, Bastien LACHAUD, Michel LARIVE, Loïc PRUD’HOMME, Adrien QUATENNENS, Jean-Hugues RATENON, Muriel RESSIGUIER, Sabine RUBIN, François RUFFIN, Bénédicte TAURINE,

members of Parliament.

¹ “Les jours heureux”, literally “The Happy Days”, is the original name of the programme of the National Council of Resistance during World War II.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

“I shouldn’t be standing here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. (...) You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I’m one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are at the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you ! ?”

Greta Thunberg, 16, activist, addressing Heads of State at the opening of the International Climate Summit on 23 September 2019 at the United Nations (New York).

Bifurcation has begun. The question is: in which direction will it go? There are two paths open to us. That of an increasingly liberal, authoritarian and liberticide world. Or that of what we call “les jours heureux”, thanks to an ecological and solidarity-based reorientation of our economic system. We opt for the second path. This is the ambition behind this motion for resolution.

The Covid - 19 pandemic : recovery must be ecological

The covid-19 pandemic is an ecological crisis. Climate change and the destruction of ecosystems through deforestation, industrialisation and urbanisation create favourable conditions for the transmission of pathogenic microbes from animals and humans. 100 million hectares of tropical forest were cut down between 1980 and 2000; more than 85% of wetlands removed since the start of the industrial era. As a consequence, 60% of the pathogenic microbes that have appeared since 1940 are of animal origin, two thirds of which originate from wild animals, and 75% of those discovered in the last 30 years. In fifty years, the number of diseases linked to zoonoses, that is to say transmitted from animals to humans, has been multiplied by 10.

And the frequency of epidemics is accelerating. Metropolisation, due to the extreme densification and overcrowding it involves, has made millions of people interdependent, transforming large urban centres into epidemic clusters that are impossible to control. Unbridled globalisation and free trade, the States’ loss of therapeutic, industrial and food sovereignty, the social and economic inequalities inherent to a capitalist system combine to transform these clusters into a pandemic which itself generates even more chaos.

Therefore this health crisis is not a parenthesis. It demonstrates the flaws that successive governments have created in the way our collective lives are organised. It reminds us that capitalism has deadly consequences and does in fact create the conditions for its own destruction, from the emergence of the virus to its inability to handle it. Beyond the health crisis, we are now also faced with an economic and social crisis with potentially dramatic consequences.

The extent of the disaster in terms of agriculture and food supply is a relentless illustration. The situation overseas, where extreme inequalities, lack of food autonomy and the disintegration of aid networks have a combined effect, sums up the whole mechanics of the situation. The new coronavirus shows us what other, potentially more serious, crises may produce. This is only a dress rehearsal for what may really happen if we do not make structural and radical changes.

The unprecedented shock that we are experiencing with more than half of humanity having to go into lockdown should prompt us to reorient all of our means of production, exchange and consumption so that society guarantees dignified conditions of work and possibilities for collective survival. But everything indicates that the government is refusing to seize this historic opportunity. Billions in public funding are given to polluting transnational companies without imposing the slightest social or ecological condition. Labour laws and social guarantees are being dismantled with increasing speed. Two free trade treaties, with Mexico and Vietnam, were finalized in the very middle of the crisis despite the real emergency being to relocalise production, and environmental standards were lowered to satisfy demands from the French employers' union Medef.

The supporters of the sacred principle of "economic growth", with no purpose beyond its own existence, are eagerly preparing to start it all up again as it was before, no matter what the cost and even if it is worse. This logic is archaic. We don't need more competition, more growth or more accumulation. We want more solidarity, more cooperation and more democracy.

That we have managed to stop, or at least slow down many nonessential activities without causing a general collapse, should shed some light on the need to redefine our needs and our scales of value, and invite us to ban all activities which are most harmful to our collective survival. Rebuilding our economies as if nothing had happened is the best way of speeding towards self-destruction when we should be taking clear and precise steps to halt the process. It is time for social and environmental justice, and for the people to get involved at all levels, from the control of public spending to State planning in the interest of the common good.

Government incapacity to cope with the ecological emergency

Government action on climate change and, more broadly, efforts by State authorities to contain the destruction of ecosystems are now in deadlock. The mega-fires in Australia or the deadly floods in Indonesia are striking examples of the extreme weather conditions that are likely to increase in the future. These extreme weather conditions cause deaths, loss of biodiversity, massive population displacement and are also extremely costly on a financial level: in 2019, these climate change-related disasters caused at least \$140 billion in damage². Not to mention the rise in temperatures which could also release old viruses trapped in permafrost hence creating the conditions for new pandemics to emerge.

Some governments, like the United States, simply choose to turn a blind eye. But even in Europe, where there is a broad consensus on the diagnosis, the actions being undertaken are failing. In France, greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 were 4.5% above the reduction target

² "Counting the cost 2019: a year of climate breakdown", Christian Aid, 27 December 2019.

set. This target corresponds to the already insufficient commitments made in Paris at the 21st UN summit, COP21, in 2015.

Faced with this situation, more and more citizens are getting involved and demanding an immediate change of course. Greta Thunberg (Sweden), Ridhima Pandey (India), Autumn Peltier (Canada), Leah Namugerwa (Uganda), Mari Copeni (USA)... The world's youth are at the forefront of this global awareness. They are urging us to act without delay.

This wave of citizens' implication has prompted the governments of several countries to formally recognize the urgency of the situation. In the spring of 2019, after Great Britain, Ireland and Canada, and following a motion for resolution submitted by the parliamentary group "La France insoumise" declaring a state of climate and ecological emergency, the French National Assembly voted to introduce a reference to "ecological and climate emergency" in article 1 of its law on energy and climate.

We must not stop there. Specialists across the world are alerting that the crisis is accelerating, announcing a sixth mass extinction of species, and none of the initiatives undertaken to date can stem its advance. We owe it to ourselves, to the planet and to future generations to take this first symbolic stance in setting out a clear political path to deal with the emergency. An ecological and solidarity-based reorientation requires a thorough restructuring of our economies, and the powers that be have not yet grasped the full extent of it.

The Green Deal project, presented by the President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen last December, was already insufficient before the health crisis. It has since been forgotten. And whatever further-diluted forms of the project may still reappear, it will never be anything other than a new attempt to green-up capitalism, a mere operation of "greenwashing" to maintain the same old system which is so dangerous both to humans and to ecosystems. In short a post-Covid "change everything so that nothing changes".

We no longer have time to expect positive results from liberal logics. No ecological policy capable of responding to the emergency can be built on a principle of carbon neutrality made out of techno-industrial and accounting artifices. The only viable world is that of a planned, public, democratic change of course that puts the economy back in its rightful place: subordinated to the common good. And not the other way around.

France has a duty of international solidarity. By undertaking a genuine ecological and solidarity-based bifurcation, it could play its full part by building a model that could inspire people across the globe.

State responsibility

To make this major transformation a success, we can draw on historical experiences. Our societies have already made successful transitions of this kind, in the aftermath of the Great Depression and after the Second World War in Europe. Echoing this period of great upheaval, progressive political movements, social organisations and intellectual figures in the United States, Great Britain and many other countries have engaged in the battle of the "Green New Deal".

In the American political imagination, the reference to the “New Deal” is akin to what “Les jours heureux”, the programme of the National Council of the Resistance during World War II, can represent in France. It is that precise moment in recent history when justice and solidarity made the most progress both economically and socially. And this is precisely what we need to make the ecological bifurcation work : to reinstate the value and the meaning of the republican motto “liberty, equality, fraternity”; to give societies collective control over their future and guarantee individuals new rights; to free the imagination and open up new horizons of possibility.

Because this ecological and solidarity-based change of course is absolutely imperative, it must be given immediate priority, by ensuring that preserving the environment and social justice take precedence over financial stability and competitiveness.

The public authorities must free the objectives of ecological transition from the constraints imposed on State action by financial market operations and ensure that the regulation of international trade and investment is subordinated to environmental sustainability.

Justice and democracy

At the same time, it is essential to put social justice at the heart of this ecological agenda.

As the IPCC reports show, the working classes are often the first victims of pollution, natural disasters, the depletion of natural resources or biodiversity collapse. Environmental injustice is in the air we breath : in France, 48,000 people die from pollution every year, 800,000 in Europe and nearly 9 million worldwide, especially in poor areas. They are also the ones who governments are requiring to pay the highest price, for example with the proposed increase in the carbon tax that led to the “yellow vest” movement in France. The end of the world and the end of the month are inextricable linked.

These injustices and inequalities are also found on an international level. Poor countries are the first victims of climate change, even though, as low greenhouse gas emitters, they are also the least responsible for it. This is morally unbearable and politically harmful. Without the conviction that the ecological cause does them justice as well, people will not adhere to the necessity of a change of course and will be more easily drawn into opposing each other. Faced with this double ecological and social challenge, peoples and politicians must regain control of the economic and financial sphere which, when deregulated, destroys everything in the name of profit and pulls us towards climate and humanitarian disaster.

It is necessary to preserve - even extend - margins of autonomy and experimentation for local authorities and the construction of common interest, guided by objectives which have been validated democratically at a national level. As this is a transversal issue, which concerns the whole of society, all State resources must be reoriented to this end. In clear terms: public authorities must take control. Both strategic and interventionist, the State must democratise and ensure that citizens take their full part in the practical development of ecological planning.

Defining desirable needs

It all begins with the collective definition of desirable and sustainable needs. The disgust many of us may feel at consumerist waste must prompt us into action to develop and enhance alternative means of production, exchange, use and consumption. Which sectors must be slowed down, and how to implement energy saving policies that are acceptable hence desirable for all? A long cultural revolution is underway, and it begins very simply with the drastic reduction of the frustration-creating machine that is the advertising industry. This has to be combined with the promotion of new indicators of well-being, and new mindsets, which will enhance democratic deliberation about the way we consume.

Next, we must ask ourselves how we should really go about satisfying these needs. Sometimes this could be done by the private sector, and others by public companies at a local level, or at times by social and solidarity-based organisations. But in many cases, the State must play a vital role in lending coherence and consistency to the reorientation in order to combine the satisfaction of basic needs with ecological preservation.

This scale of ambition for public action on ecological transition requires us to articulate two main areas of action: ecological planning and the consolidation of new social rights.

Ecological planning

The first is concerned with the coordination of economic activities. The market price system is inadequate for the qualitative change we need. As Financial Times chief economic editorialist Martin Wolf sums up, “the use of price incentives is inadequate”: it is too late to rely on market forces. Carbon markets or taxes are a retrospective logic: economic activity generates “negative externalities”, and these measures seek to limit them by internalising them, by integrating them into production costs. We need to apply an a priori logic, which prevents pollution or biodiversity deterioration from occurring from the outset.

Historically, State intervention in production choices have been generically referred to as “planning”. In the 20th century, it took various forms. In France, the tradition of “indicative” or “concerted” planning needs to be reinforced in order to achieve ecological transition, after years of neo-liberal damage. It should be recalled that the efforts of post-war planners were decisive in rebuilding the country. It is a challenge of the same order which is facing the present-day generations.

In order to make democratic ecological planning a success, we must begin by developing the statistical tools which take environmental impacts into account at all levels. Making these visible is a prerequisite for planning the necessary structural changes and enabling individuals, organisations and territories to follow long-term sustainable transition paths. It is only on a basis of reliable environmental information that a programme of massive public investment in clean energy and infrastructure and disinvestment from fossil and nuclear energy can be undertaken. On the climate front, the objective is to fully decarbonise the economy within ten years.

In broader terms, we need a programme of reduction and sustainability in the use of natural resources and measures to preserve/restore ecosystems. The climate crisis is only one dimension of the ecological emergency situation. The State needs to organise a series of other

bifurcations : moving away from the agricultural productivism that leads to soil depletion, exhausts farm workers and provokes repeated health crises ; organising energy saving and efficiency ; making the territorial changes necessary to relocate production and consumption.

New social progress

The second area for action concerns socio-political conditions. The structural changes necessary, on both a production and consumption level, will not be popular unless solid guarantees are provided for the population, and for workers in particular.

Periods of transformation are always moments that redefine relationships between social groups, often to the detriment of those who are in the most precarious situations. We have been able to observe this from the Coronavirus crisis. Front line workers are the ones who operate the most essential networks. The scale of social recognition and remuneration is inversely proportional to their degree of exposure. Let's also remember that these workers are mainly women: 87% of nurses, 97% of home care workers, 73% of cleaners, 76% of cashiers, 71% of teaching staff. The country depends as much on them today as it did before. However, they earn 26% less than men.

The dominant groups, the rich and the big firms are free to exploit these people as an opportunity to further accelerate the destruction of the industrial fabric, the dismantling of work collectives and of social achievements. Proof once again, amidst the chaos of Covid-19, is that the same old liberal motto of extending working hours should again be doing the rounds. As in the case of the defunct carbon tax, they can also use ecological taxation as an instrument to finance tax reductions for the wealthy. In order to avoid this risk of making the majority of the population hostile to a reorientation of public policies, ecological bifurcation must be synonymous with social progress.

In particular, this requires a new age of industrial employment. A form of reindustrialisation is needed to reduce the ecological damage of international freight transport and to repair the social and territorial divides that have been created between the winners and the losers of the last 40 years of neo-liberal globalisation. The Coronavirus crisis has brought to light the dramatic consequences of States losing their health and food sovereignty. This industrial relocation must be accompanied by a complete shift in paradigm. We need to move from a productivist approach to one which is more geared towards extending the life cycle of objects : the maintenance, repair and improvement of objects over time must take precedence over the logic of the all-disposable. It is a question of jobs and skills as much as industrial outlook.

We then need to ensure that the jobs necessary to this ecological transition are given a proper status. A new collective agreement would make it possible to set the wage and job security standards needed to attract talent and propose attractive professional careers, in sectors such as the thermal renovation of buildings, recycling or the ecological restoration of soils and rivers.

Finally, the “right to employment”, that constitutional principle that has been eluding us for decades, needs to be respected. In a context of national effort towards ecological transition, it is unthinkable that so many people should be left by the wayside. Like the “job guarantee” proposed in the US Green New Deal by Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie

Sanders, for example, the State must commit to offering or funding a job to any long-term unemployed person who wants to work, at the baseline public-sector wage or higher.

This not only reduces unemployment, but also meets needs in sectors that are non-polluting or have a positive social and environmental effect : improving urban environments (urban parks, building restoration), caring for dependent persons and young children, school or artistic activities, etc. These jobs are particular in that they are not costly in terms of resources and therefore have no impact on the environment. The experience of the “zero unemployment territories” gives us a preview of how things would be if we implemented this “job guarantee” on a large scale, which could be supported by the institution of an “enforceable right to employment”.

The “jours heureux” pact

In general terms, what we are referring to here is a total shift in paradigm, a complete rethinking of priorities. It is the system that needs to be changed, not the climate. Clearly, ecology and liberalism are not compatible. The ecological and climatic crisis that we are witnessing and experiencing, the symptoms of which are becoming ever more numerous and far-reaching, is proof enough that it is impossible to persist with the goal of infinite growth in a world with limited resources.

The ambitious programme of green public investment and public guarantees of employment must therefore be freed from the constraints still weighing on public budgets. By paralyzing the State, these constraints aggravate the environmental crisis. This is all the more deplorable in that the central banks have been able to demonstrate their firepower, but only with the aim of stabilising private funds. Mobilising the sovereign power of currency must enable us to break with market dependency and ensure that productive resources are fully committed to the necessary ecological bifurcation. The debt wall must come down.

The aim for maximum profit must no longer take precedence over the preservation of the ecosystem that makes human life possible, and building a world which makes that life both beautiful and worth living for us all. Our compass is what we call the “green rule”, which requires that we do not take more from nature than it can replenish or produce more than it can sustain, and it is this principle that should structure all our policies and stimulate our creativity. Our programme is people’s ecology. Our ambition is the ecological change of course we call “bifurcation”. To revive the taste for happiness, and bring in “les jours heureux”.

MOTION FOR RESOLUTION

Single article

The National Assembly,

Considering Article 34-1 of the French Constitution;

Considering Article 136 of the Standing Orders of the French National Assembly;

Considering that the policies pursued by France and the European Union have not for the time being led to a drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions or contributed to the preservation of biodiversity;

Considering that our unsustainable economic system is a major factor in climate change and that the ecological deadlock threatens the lives of peoples and ecosystems as well as the survival of future generations;

This Assembly declares that it is France's duty to redirect the State's resources with a view to an ecological bifurcation capable of rising to the challenges we face.

It calls for the practical implementation of a “green rule” principle taking precedence over all other norms, which imposes that we not to take from nature more renewable resources than it can reconstitute in one year, nor produce more, including waste, than it can support.

It also invites the Government to submit to the National Assembly urgent measures that will make it possible to initiate a tangible ecological bifurcation in order to open up new horizon of potential and bring in “les jours heureux”.

These measures, which are divided into four main, non-exhaustive areas, could constitute a road map.

1. State responsibility, social justice and democracy

- Free the objectives of this ecological bifurcation from the constraints of financial markets and break with dependence on markets by making international trade and investment conditional on environmental sustainability.
- Engage in a process of solidarity-based protectionism, which implies relocation, industrial decarbonation (e.g. by branching off into eco-construction), and a new programme of international cooperation based on respect for human, social and environmental rights and the exchange of technology and knowledge.
- Equip ourselves with the statistical tools that take account of environmental impacts at all levels and calculate greenhouse gas emissions linked to the consumption of products in order to greatly reduce Europe's ecological dependence.

2. Definition of desirable needs

- Organise a redistribution of wealth through the re-appropriation of common goods such as water and energy and the implementation of free access to the quantities which are necessary to ensure a dignified and healthy life for every citizen.
- Create new indicators to redefine well-being by taking into account all its necessary components: health, education, social ties, including the right to rest, peace, quiet, the possibility to slow down and “disconnect”, which will enhance democratic deliberation about the way we consume.
- Resist advertising that invades our lives and break the all-disposable consumption pattern.

3. Ecological planification

- Introduce a massive public investment programme in favour of renewable energies, clean infrastructures, disinvestment from fossil and nuclear energies and in favour of the thermal renovation of housing.
- Switch to peasant farming and ecological agriculture by subsidising farmers who wish to reconvert and guarantee them a decent income that is not dependent on mass retail.
- Operate a decrease in the use of natural resources and initiate measures for the preservation/restoration of ecosystems.

4. New social progress

- Create the ecological and social interaction employment necessary to meet the basic needs of citizens in a way that respects the constitutional principle of the “right to employment”.
- Reduce working hours, and introduce a 6th week of paid holidays in order that ensure “work for all and better work”, which is the fairest, most effective and least costly measure against unemployment.
- Reform training courses to adapt the number of professionals in all sectors and at all levels to the challenges of this ecological and solidarity-based bifurcation.
- Strengthen and extend public influence by creating jobs in the public sector so that the State maintains a strong public involvement, allowing to resist private influences whilst extending public networks and services.