

I would like to tackle four issues:

1. We should be **coherent about the status of GDP**. The core message is not yet consistent on that point:

*Point 2 : “GDP is **not** an indicator of wellbeing or welfare; it is an indicator of economic market activity; it does **not** pretend to be an indicator of wellbeing or welfare, but some use it as such; GDP growth is **not** necessarily a progress indicator, though the news often portrays it as such”.*

We have now reached a consensus on this statement. But:

*Point 3 : “More adequate indices of progress, of wealth and wellbeing must include environmental and social indicators, **in addition** to the traditional economic ones.”*

The expression “in addition” is questionable.

If we agree that GDP **is not** an indicator of wellbeing, if we recognize the existence of negative correlations between GDP growth and the quality of life, then why should we keep it as a basic standard for a new indicator?

Of course there might be a strategic issue here, and a difference between short run goals (keeping GDP) and long run goals (leaving it aside), but we have to be clear on this point, otherwise the risk appears that huge efforts eventually lead to very minor changes.

2. We should put more emphasis on the fact that there are **strong economic interests involved** in pursuing economic growth without restriction and in keeping GDP as a wellbeing indicator.

We should recognize that we live in a kind of schizophrenic society:

- on the one hand we know that the path we move on is not sustainable and does not make us happy: this conference, many NGO’s activities, and some academic work on the subject testimony of this phenomenon.

- but on the other hand we are flooded by advertisements and by all kinds of encouragements to consume, and produce, and drive and fly as much as possible.

Going beyond GDP requires addressing this contradiction.

In the same line, the move beyond GDP is an implicit recognition that the market cannot answer to our aspirations and that there is today a strong need for public intervention, from local to global. And this might also encounter some **political resistance**.

3. The **distributional concerns** are important, and not included in the core message. Inequalities (not only income inequalities, but also unequal access to education, to

healthcare, to culture) have risen during the last thirty years and will probably keep on rising in the future, despite the millennium goals. On this point we are moving backward as compared to the model that was set up after the WWII, at the time when GDP was implemented. Besides the fact that inequalities are often felt as a limit to social wellbeing, inequalities give in fact more power to the wealthy citizens and hamper the democratic process of redefining the progress of societies. Thus, the move towards a more even sharing of income and wealth might as well come upon political resistance

4. The move beyond GDP cannot be a technocratic process, it has to be kept on the **democratic side**, since it is a normative issue. A question such as “Where do we want to be in ten year time” has to do with values and ends. If we seriously want to address the question of “*what is well-being and how to enhance it*”, people should be allowed to express themselves as much as possible and at every stage of the process. It is a great thing that major institutions favour this questioning, but it is crucial to widespread the inquiring as far as possible and in a democratic way. This is the only chance for a broad and sustainable consensus.