The Recalibrating Our "Moral Compasses" (ROMC) Survey Project

Quick Reference Document A

to

A. ROMC Survey Project's List of Ten Critical Challenges
B. How the ROMC Survey Project is different from many well-knowncritical challenge assessments and solutions guides in the past 50 years
C. The text—in the Introduction to "Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication" United Nations Environment Programme 2011—for the quotes "which deplete the world's stock of natural wealth" and "allow businesses to run up significant, largely unaccounted for, and unchecked social and environmental externalities")

A. ROMC Survey Project's List of Ten Critical Challenges

[Note: The following text is from p. 4-5, and p. 7-8 of The Recalibrating our "Moral Compasses" (ROMC) Survey Project (The Potential for Valuable Contributions—13 page overview)]

The "Example Challenge Assessment"(Appendix B in the ROMC Survey Prospectus) is an example response to Question #1—which requests a 10-20 page critical challenge assessment.

The "Example Challenge Assessment" identifies 10 challenges as the most critical challenges of our times—*and all of those challenges are significantly affected by variations in human morality, the "leanings of human aspirations", and a need for more consensus about the meanings of "right livelihood" and "moral compasses".*

The 10 critical challenges identified in the "Example Challenge Assessment" are:

1) Global Warming and Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

2) A Marginalization of the Treasured Wisdom of Religious, Spiritual, and Moral Traditions

3) "Cultures" of violence, greed, corruption, and overindulgence—which have become so common that many of us accept such as inevitable; which are a significant part of the current crises of confidence in financial markets; and which are in many ways slowing the restructuring of investment priorities needed to respond to an increasing number of other critical challenges

4) The End of the Fossil Fuel Era

5) The increasing world population and its implications relating to widespread resource depletion—with a special focus on the increasing number of people who are consuming material goods and ecological resources indiscriminately

6) We are creating more and more "urban agglomerations"—(cities with a population of more than 1 million people—more than 400), which require more and more complex and energy intensive infrastructures, where it is more and more difficult to trace the consequences of our individual investments of time, energy, and money—and which are the least appropriate models when it comes to implementing resolutions to many of the other challenges in this ten point assessment

7) Global inequities and the tragic cycles of malnutrition, disease, and death

8) Significant progress towards positive tipping points for the other challenges cited in this list will almost certainly make it impossible for the U.S., and many other countries, to resolve unprecedented public debt

9) Deterioration of trust/confidence in institutions responsible for guiding public discourse—and the related loss of social and spiritual cohesion

10) Sorting out what are real challenges and what are sound and practical solutions is becoming more and more difficult—as there are now, in most communities of the world, a multitude of ideas of all kinds coming to the fore in personal, family, community, and cultural life—all at the same time. Thus, even analysis supported by much credible evidence—that there are many danger signs flashing now (involving significant threats to ecological stability and social cohesion)—can be easily lost amidst a swirl of misinformation, other more trivial information, and the "siren song" of multiple entertainment venues.

In addition, the supporting evidence provided (in the "Example Challenge Assessment") for each of the 10 challenges (above) points, again and again, to how much more progress we could make towards positive tipping points on these challenges if there were positive changes in human morality, and more widespread use of reliable "moral compasses".

For further evidence from the reader's own experience, a confidence of success "evaluation tool" is offered below. Readers are encouraged to try out this confidence of success "evaluation tool" on the list of 10 critical challenges above.

An Informal Confidence of Success "Evaluation Tool"(for evaluating "Plans" and "Confidence of Success")

Plans

__ I believe we have a relevant, practical, and doable action plan for resolving this challenge.
__ I believe we are taking the steps necessary to develop a relevant, practical, and doable action plans
     for resolving this challenge.
__ I am not sure if we know how to resolve this challenge.
__ I do not believe we know how to resolve this challenge.

Confidence of Success

__ I am confident we can resolve this challenge
__ I believe we are moving in the right direction to resolve this challenge.
__ I am not sure if we will be able to resolve this challenge.
__ I have no confidence in our ability to resolve this challenge.

B. How the ROMC Survey Project is different from many well-known critical challenge assessments and solutions guides in the past 50 years

[Note: The following text is from p. 10-11 of The Recalibrating our "Moral Compasses" (ROMC) Survey Project (The Potential for Valuable Contributions—13 page overview)]

What about critical challenge assessments and solution guides which do not give serious attention to variations in human morality, the "leanings of human aspirations", and a need for more consensus about the meanings of "right livelihood" and "moral compasses" as a significant factors affecting the nature of the challenges of our times?

> ("… there are truths which none can be free to ignore, if one is to have that wisdom through which life can become useful. These are the truths concerning the structures of the good life and concerning the factual conditions by which it may be achieved….")

Keeping the above passage in mind, if readers explore the following challenge assessments and solution guides (provided here as fairly representative and well-known examples from the past 50 years)--

"The Limits to Growth" report (1972; updated 2004) (and "2052 - A Global Forecast for the Next Forty
        Years", published in 2012 by one of the original authors)
"Gaia: An Atlas of Planetary Management" (1984; updated 2005)
Worldwatch Institute—annual "State of the World" Reports, and "Worldwatch Reports" (formerly
        "Worldwatch Papers")
UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlement Programme)—"State of the World's Cities" Reports,
        and (formerly annual) "Global Reports on Human Settlements"
UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)—annual "Human Development" Reports
United Nations—Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Progress Reports, and Sustainable
        Development Goals (SDGs) Updates
IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)—ongoing reports
International Monetary Fund—bi-annual "World Economic Outlook" Reports
World Bank—"World Development Reports"
World Economic Forum—annual "Outlook on the Global Agenda" Reports
International Energy Agency—annual "World Energy Outlook" Reports
"Pathways to Deep Decarbonization" [Published by Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)
        and Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI), September 2014
        (and presented at the United Nations Climate Summit on September 23, 2014)]

--they will find that those critical challenge assessments, and their resulting solution guides, *do not give serious attention tovariations in human morality, the "leanings of human aspirations", and a need for more consensus about the meanings of "right livelihood" and "moral compasses"as significant factors affecting the nature of the challenges of our time*.

Are there any serious limitations to the critical challenge assessments and solution guides offered by such reports?

The ROMC Survey Project believes the answer to that question is yes.

And should we (consequently) re-evaluate our trust in the reliability of such critical challenge assessments and solution guides?

The ROMC Survey Project believes the answer to that question is also yes.

The ROMC Survey Project believes there are many unprecedented challenges which are now on dangerous trajectories (many danger signs flashing red); that there is a high likelihood of significant, actually occurring, and ongoing damage to ecological stability and social cohesion; and (thus) that there is an urgent need to reach positive tipping points on many of these challenges as soon as possible.

And there is much evidence provided in the ROMC Survey Project Prospectus--

[for example, in the

Discussion for Reason #2 in "Why this Project is Needed—Discussion Supplement" (Appendix A);
"Example Challenge Assessment" (20 pages) (Appendix B);
Discussion in support of Interfaith Peacebuilding in "Example Solution Guide" (5 p.) (in Appendix C)]

--in support of the unprecedented nature of the above stated assessment.

If we have serious concerns about the nature and reliability of our "moral compasses" at this critical time, we may not be able to avoid the kind of capital misallocations "which deplete the world's stock of natural wealth" and "allow businesses to run up significant, largely unaccounted for, and unchecked social and environmental externalities"… *and thus we may do more to create widespread cynicism, rather than confidence, about our collective capacity to resolve the unprecedented challenges we face.*

But how will we even know if we have such concerns if many of the most well-known critical challenge assessments and solution guides do not give serious attention to the nature and reliability of our "moral compasses"?

What makes this ROMC Survey Project most unique, and why it could make especially valuable contributions at this critical time, is that it believes variations in human morality, the "leanings of human aspirations", and a need for more consensus about the meanings of "right livelihood" and "moral compasses" *are significant factors affecting the nature of the challenges of our time*—and thus it

incorporates such factors into both survey design, and survey presentation.

C. The text—in the Introduction to "Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication" United Nations Environment Programme 2011—for the quotes "which deplete the world's stock of natural wealth" and "allow businesses to run up significant, largely unaccounted for, and unchecked social and environmental externalities")

[Note: The following text is from p. 3-4 of The Recalibrating our "Moral Compasses" (ROMC) Survey Project (The Potential for Valuable Contributions—13 page overview)]

Why does The ROMC Survey Project give serious attention to the *significant factors affecting the nature of the challenges of our time* mentioned above?

Consider the following passage:

"Most economic development and growth strategies encouraged rapid accumulation of physical, financial and human capital, but at the expense of excessive depletion and degradation of natural capital, which includes the endowment of natural resources and ecosystems. By depleting the world's stock of natural wealth – often irreversibly – this pattern of development and growth has had detrimental impacts on the wellbeing of current generations and presents tremendous risks and challenges for the future. The recent multiple crises are symptomatic of this pattern. Existing policies and market incentives have contributed to this problem of capital misallocation because they allow businesses to run up significant, largely unaccounted for, and unchecked social and environmental externalities."

[From "Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication" United Nations Environment Programme 2011; (in Introduction, see section "An Era of Capital Misallocation", p. 14-15) (confirmed November 17, 2014)]

The ROMC Survey Project believes that--

1) Human morality is not a constant—it is not something which is the same throughout the centuries of human existence; and thus it is something which can become degraded or raised up, depending on the leanings of human aspirations.

2) If we have serious concerns about the nature and reliability of our "moral compasses" at this critical time, we may not be able to make enough of a transition away from capital misallocations "which deplete the world's stock of natural wealth" and "allow businesses to run up significant, largely unaccounted for, and unchecked social and environmental externalities"… *and thus we may do more to create widespread cynicism, rather than confidence, about our collective capacity to resolve the unprecedented challenges we face.*