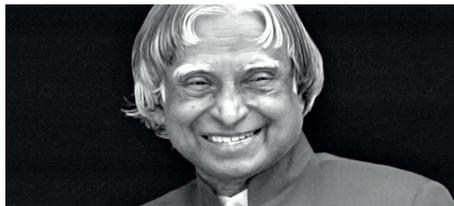


Global Vision 2030

author: A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

The European Union and India radiate a message to the world that regional cooperation and inter-regional collaboration will lead to a win-win situation for all, so that we can have a politically, socio-economically emergent civilisation. Our contribution will be judged on whether we could, before the end of the 21st century, make all regions transform into happy unions leading to the emergence of a **world of prosperous and peaceful unions**.



I am reminded of the dream of the Indian poet Kaniyan Poongundranar, who said 3,000 years back: “I am a world citizen, every citizen is my own kith and kin”. With this experience let us examine how we can create a sustainable future for the generations to come. How do we create a world with nations which are people empowered states with vibrant democracy and efficiency? What could be the possible ways to achieve this vision?

There are two possible solutions. The first seems to be the conventional approach that has been followed so far across the world. It starts with working for prosperity

and peace at the national level within local boundaries and perspectives, hoping that over the long run it will percolate to the regional and ultimately the global level. Collective experience across the world highlights that this solution has not yielded the desired results, and with the globalising world, its efficacy in the future is uncertain.

The second solution would be to look at global prosperity and peace as the overall objective of the whole world, percolating to the regional and ultimately the national level of the participating nations. It is all about making a study with reference to a global context and of finding how every nation can align towards the global missions. It must be remembered that national missions inspire citizens; this spirit has to be directed towards globally important goals.

The present global environment indicates that we need new and out of the box solutions. What is the global dynamic of the present time?

GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND FOUR CONNECTIVITIES

Today, the challenges of the world are poverty, illiteracy, safe drinking water, clean and green energy, the equitable distribution of resources, quality education with values for all, societal imbalances, diseases, quality healthcare for all and good living conditions.

PHOTO: FORUM REUTERS/TORGOS KARAHALIS

Individual nations are working together to find a solution. These challenges are not only individual phenomena of certain nations, but a collective responsibility of the global community. They take various manifestations depending on local dynamics and are interconnected with different factors.

The world today is integrally related through four rapid connectivities: the environment, people, the economy and ideas. We all know that global warming and climate change are no longer problems of individual nations, but are planetary. Today, a single product may be made out of components sourced from multiple continents and provide services to markets far from their place of origin. We have also seen how economic turbulence originating in one part of the globe has shaken the whole world and how a volcanic eruption in an island country brought the entire airline industry to a halt.

Advances in transportation have progressively made movement of people across nations and regions more feasible. This has led to the globalisation of skills and talents, which can flow seamlessly from one nation to another. It has also led to the globalisation of human diseases, the most recent instance being of different kinds of flu, which can rapidly spread across the globe and threaten the entire humankind. Similarly, ideas and innovations are no longer geographically or politically confined. An invention made today takes no time to find its market thousand of miles away. The expansion of information and communication technology and the convergence of technological tools are structuring new world knowledge, where the problems of one part of the world can be solved by multiple experts based at different points of the globe. The seamless flow of information and people also means that local or regional issues will invariably gain global prominence and unaddressed problems and poverty can mutate rapidly into global terrorism, as we are already witnessing.

In order to create a sustainable future for the generations to come we need to change the approach from conventional to innovative and find new and out-of-the-box solutions.

The world today is integrally connected.

Inter-connections between global vision, regional cooperation and the goals of individual countries are the basis for creating symbiotic relations and mutual contacts among nations.

Thanks to these connections a world that draws its strength from democracy could develop. I believe that all regions could develop happy relations among themselves and that thereby a world will arise of prosperous and happy unions.

A WORLD IN WHICH PROBLEMS CROSS NATIONAL BORDERS

This flow of ideas has also led to the increasing importance globally of human rights and the propagation of the idea of democracy. Let me recall an experience. When I was travelling in an aircraft abroad, I was told that much of its controls were software driven and had most probably been developed in India. When I presented my credit card, I was told that it was being processed by a backend server located in Mauritius. When I walked into a multinational software company in Bangalore (India), I was fascinated to find that it truly presented a multicultural environment. A software developer from China, working

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under a project leader from Korea, was working with a software engineer from India, a hardware architect from the US and a communication expert from Germany to solve a banking problem in Australia. When I saw all of them working together like one family and forgetting about the culture from which they came or the language they speak, I felt that the best hope for such borderless interaction to continue is to inculcate the spirit of 'borderlessness' in every field of human activity on our planet Earth.

Hence, it is beyond doubt that we are progressively evolving a world where our problems would cut across all boundaries and would be multi-pronged. This implies that solutions will have to be integrated with knowledge of multiple nations and skills of multiple societies. I can visualise a distinctive profile for the **Nations of the World in 2030** that will result in a new global system for prosperity and peace. A World of Nations where:

- ⇒ the divide between rural and urban, rich and poor, developed and developing has narrowed
- ⇒ there is an equitable distribution of, and adequate access to, energy and quality water
- ⇒ the core competencies of each nation are identified. Missions synergising the core competencies of different nations lead to economic advantage and faster development for all the societies
- ⇒ all the students of all societies are imparted education with value system
- ⇒ affordable quality health care is available to all
- ⇒ where the governance is responsive, transparent and corruption-free
- ⇒ crimes against women and children are absent and no one in the society feels alienated.
- ⇒ every nation is able to give a clean, green environment to all its citizens
- ⇒ people are prosperous, healthy, secure, devoid of terrorism, peaceful and happy and all continues with a sustainable growth path.

⇒ creative leadership ensures effective mechanisms to resolve conflicts between nations and societies in a timely manner, keeping the overall peace and prosperity of the world as a goal.

This is the kind of the world we have to bequeath to the youth of the world, the foundation of which shall be enshrined in regional cooperation and development based on the experience of India and the European Union.

The world has witnessed many successes for regional cooperation, be it in political, economic, social, environmental protection, or common developmental missions. Such cooperation has led to mutual prosperity, sustained peace and will help overcome the centuries-old barriers.

THE EU, AN EXAMPLE OF CONNECTIVITY AMONG NATIONS

One such shining example is the founding of the European Union. It should be remembered that Europe was the theatre of conflicts for hundreds of years among and between the nations, including two world wars. Today, the EU has become an example for connectivity among nations, probably with no possibility of war, and lead to lasting regional peace. Its formation and performance reveal the necessity for active regional cooperation in the political and economic spheres between multiple regions of the world, of democratic nations even at difficult times.

Likewise, I would like to touch upon India's personal experience in regional cooperation to fulfill the millennium development goals set by the United Nations for developing nations. During my presidency, the Pan-African e-network between India and 53 African nations to provide seamless and integrated satellite, fibre optics and wireless network was established. As part of the project, 12 universities, 17 Super Specialty Hospitals, 53 tele-medicine centres and 53 tele-education centres in Africa will be connected by both sides.

This e-network will primarily provide tele-education, tele-medicine, Internet, video-conferencing and VOIP services. It also supports e-governance, e-commerce, infotainment,

As one says in India:

*Righteousness
in the heart*

Where there is righteousness in the heart
There is beauty in the character.
When there is beauty in the character,
There is harmony in the home.
When there is harmony in the home,
There is an order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There is peace in the world.

resource mapping and meteorological services. So far, 45 countries are connected. This e-network is an example of international social responsibility emanating from regional cooperation and acts as an enabler, which has a cascading effect on the socio-economic development of many developing nations and their societies. Global communities may like to facilitate the execution of such international social responsibility programmes that will enrich regional development.

**WORLD KNOWLEDGE
PLATFORM**

This is a case how two nations, India and Russia, have engaged in 'hard cooperation' based on their core competencies to evolve a world-class product and systems using innovation, creativity and knowledge generation, sharing and dissemination among the scientists of the two countries. One of the significant technological breakthroughs in India and Russia in this decade is the design, development and production of the Supersonic Cruise Missile – BRAHMOS by joint venture. BrahMos is the first universal supersonic operational cruise missile in the world that can be launched from multiple platforms. Most importantly, this advanced, world-class system was realised

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in the shortest possible time, thanks to technological and financial co-operation.

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Likewise, I have a vision of how nations can come together to solve our common problem of energy and the environment using the most potential tool of humanity's knowledge. I have advocated for the research and development of Space-based Solar Power (SSP) plants, which could be the answer to humankind's priority need for energy and our utmost concern of mitigating the climate change risks. For the realisation of such missions, we have to share knowledge worldwide and freely exchange data and information to establish the technical and economic feasibility of designing, building and operating a system-of-systems consisting of low-cost space transportation and solar satellites. I have suggested this be done in an open and transparent manner through a consortium of selected world universities, laboratories and industries organised as a World Knowledge Platform in which all nations, particularly the present and future

space-faring nations, could participate. This knowledge platform could function in the form of a global not-for-profit foundation as the first immediate step for creating mutual understanding between nations.

There may be many successful examples of regional cooperation and development, but these are all islands of success. If we were to connect these together like a garland in the regions, it would lead to global peace and prosperity.

INDIA VISION 2020

India is spearheading the developed **India Vision 2020 programme**, transforming itself into an economically developed nation. It has identified five areas where it has a core competence for integrated action: (1) agriculture and food processing (2) education and healthcare (3) information and communication technology – tele-education, tele-medicine, e-governance (4) infrastructure: PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas), the interlinking of rivers and water management, reliable and quality electric power, and surface transport, and (5) self-reliance in critical technologies. These five areas are closely interrelated and coordinated, leading to food, economic and national security.

PURA may be applicable globally for the sustained advancement of developed and developing nations and their societies. It means:

↪ Villages must be connected within themselves and main towns and metros through good roads and, wherever needed, by railway lines. They must have other infrastructure like schools, colleges, hospitals and amenities for the local population and visitors. This is **physical connectivity**.

↪ In the emerging knowledge era, native knowledge has to be preserved and enhanced with the latest tools of technology, training and research. The villages must have access to good education from the best teachers wherever they are, the benefits of good medical treatment, and the latest information on pursuits like agriculture, fishing, horticulture and food processing. This means they must have **electronic connectivity**.

A poem written and recited by A.P.J. Abdul Kalam during his address to the European Parliament in 2007:

Creativity – A Message from Mother Earth

Beautiful environment leads,
To beautiful minds.
Beautiful minds generate,
Creativity.

Created explorers of land and sea,
Created minds of innovation,
Created even a continent,
Created everywhere, why?

Created birth of many discoveries,
Created great scientific minds,
Created unexplored path,
Led the new pathway.
In the minds of the best,
Worst was born,
Generated battle scenes.
Hundreds of years with wars.

Many and many of my children,
Lost in the land and sea,
And also in many nations,
Tears filled, another ocean of sadness.

Then, then came,
The vision of European Union,
Took the oath,
“Never to turn human knowledge
against ourselves”.

United her thinking,
Action emanated,
To make Europe prosperous and peaceful,
Born, the European Union.

That ‘Glad Tidings’, captivated,
The people of the planet of my galaxy.
OH! European Union,
Let your missions spread everywhere,
like the air we breathe.

⇒ Once the above is achieved, knowledge connectivity has been enabled. This can facilitate the ability to increase productivity, utilisation of spare time, awareness of health welfare, ensuring a market for products, increasing awareness of product quality, interacting with partners, getting the best equipment, increasing transparency, and so in general **knowledge connectivity**.

⇒ Once these three connectivities are ensured, they facilitate earning capacity, leading to **economic connectivity**.

Thus far we have seen the inter-linkages and **inter-connections between global vision, regional cooperation and national missions**. There is a symbiotic and mission-oriented relationship among these three dimensions of development which thrives in a democratic environment. This is a symbol of the evolution of a people-empowered state with efficient missions.

What would be the standards with which we could define the distinctive achievements coming out of the three-dimensional approach to sustainable prosperity and peace for the world?

TOWARDS REALISING A PEOPLE-EMPOWERED SOCIETY

When the world joins together to build a cohesive people-empowered society, it is necessary to ensure that the benefits of development encompass all sections of the civilisation. The world over, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and deprivation are driving the forces of anger, hatred and violence. These forces link themselves to earlier real or perceived historical enmities, tyrannies, injustices, inequities, ethnic issues and religious fundamentalism to flow into an outburst of extremism worldwide. Many nations have witnessed, and are witnessing, the manifestation of a reac-

tion against such inequalities. We have to jointly address ourselves to the root causes of such phenomena to find lasting solutions for promoting peace. Apart from economic prosperity, what we need is a carrier of 'righteousness', the eternal goodness and wholesomeness in human conduct.

THE EVOLUTION OF ENLIGHTENED SOCIETY

With this spirit of righteousness in the heart, an important outcome of evolving a people-empowered state is what I call the 'evolution of enlightened society.' How do we create it? The foundation should be based on imparting education with a global value system to the youth, transforming religion into spirituality and accelerating economic development missions for a societal transformation with inclusive growth across the nations. The evolution of such a society will be our most prominent framework for ensuring the sustainability of prosperity and peace achieved through global missions. ●

A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM, PhD: former President of India (2002-2007); an aerospace engineer, professor, and chancellor of the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST). He is popularly known as the Missile Man of India for his work on the development of ballistic missile and space rocket technology. Kalam played a pivotal organisational, technical and political role in India's Pokhran-II nuclear test in 1998, the first since the original nuclear test by India in 1974. In May 2011, Kalam launched his mission for the youth of the nation: the What Can I Give Movement. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, in 1997.

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