



With Nature at the center of decision-making

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Executive Summary

With Nature at the center of decision-making, it is part of the series of white papers from the Manuel Ballbé Chair of Human Security and Global Law, dedicated to exploring the potential of eco-systemic thinking. This work's main purpose is to analyze and propose a transition to an ecocentric decision-making model, based on Nature, from an approach that goes beyond the dominant anthropocentric paradigms in public policies, environmental regulation, global governance, and, in general, in public and private decision-making processes.

Starting with the recognition of the current ecological crisis, exacerbated by neoliberal policies, rampant extractivism, and the growing environmental inequality between the Global North and South, the reflections presented here, the result of my research processes, argue for the necessity of placing Nature at the center of all political, economic, and legal decisions (both public and private).

In this analysis, I invite the reader to reflect on the need to redefine the State–Society–Nature relationships, highlighting the interdependence between ecological health and human well-being as the essential basis for achieving true ecocentric security, grounded in a critical perspective that proposes an ecocentric model recognizing Nature's Rights and transforming environmental governance (and natural resources) through a polycentric approach, involving multiple levels and spaces of decision-making, ranging from collective action in local communities to global politics in international forums.

Regarding its content, this white paper begins with a look toward an ecocentric model for Nature-based decision-making, acknowledging the urgency to redefine the relationship between humanity and Nature and calling for a return to our history to increase awareness of our interdependence with the natural environment. I also present some reflections on the colonial past and current neocolonial dynamics and their environmental effects and impacts, as well as the risks to democracy and its relationship with the environment.

Finally, I put forward some ideas on how we should think about and design new policies and decision-making frameworks for the Anthropocene, from the perspectives of ecocentrism and ecological justice, a framework of principles that should be accompanied by profound processes of education and social awareness, allowing progress toward a sustainable and intergenerationally fair and equitable model, integrating ethical and ecological precepts into all spheres of human development and global environmental governance, ultimately, a new framework for action and decision-making based on Nature.

Introduction

In a global context of growing concerns and uncertain scenarios due to rapid environmental changes, often irreversible ecological damage and impacts, where increasingly devastating threats of climate change begin to materialize, and where the dystopian world we saw a few years ago in environmental documentaries or conservation campaigns is being surpassed by reality, the transformation of life and the planet as we know them is being determined by the rapid advance into or toward the Anthropocene era, a shift in geological era as a result of human activities.

This accumulation of scenarios leads us to think and rethink development models, talking about new paradigms such as sustainable development, the green or circular economy, clean energy, among many other efforts to try to adapt to the world we have been creating as a consequence of our own intervention. It is here that we must consider the necessity, but above all, the ethical imperative, of putting Nature at the center of decision-making.

01 Towards an Ecocentric Model for Nature-Based Decision Making

One of the first bodies called to change is the State. To move towards an ecocentric state of law that places Nature at the center of decision-making, we need a profound rethinking of the foundations upon which the relationships between humanity, the economic model, institutions, regulatory frameworks, public policy, and Nature are structured. The global ecological crisis has demonstrated the insufficiency of current legal frameworks, which have operated under an instrumentalist logic that subordinates nature to human needs, without considering its intrinsic value or its necessary condition for the continuity of life (Argüello-Rueda, 2024).

Therefore, the first challenge we face lies in building a state model that, just as it advances in recognizing and realizing Human Rights, also recognizes the Rights of Nature and positions them at the core of public policy formulation and decision-making. This shifts the narratives of environmental subordination towards governance structures that reflect the interdependence between human and ecological systems, offering a legal and action framework that allows us to rethink ourselves from and with Nature.

This transition process also implies that we must overcome the dichotomy between the social rule of law and the neoliberal policies that have prevailed in recent decades, which have facilitated the commodification of natural resources and reinforced the asymmetries between the Global North and South, thus deepening environmental

inequalities, as seen with impacts and environmental costs. In this sense, it is imperative, as a matter of ecological justice, that this transformation begins with a clear assumption of historical responsibilities that Global North States have had in environmental degradation and in shaping an extractivist development model that has exacerbated the ecological crisis, at the expense of natural resources of the South countries (Martínez-Alier, 2021).

We cannot continue to conceive the economy as isolated from environmental reality; instead, economic policies must integrate effective ecological justice mechanisms to mitigate and compensate for the disproportionate impacts that have fallen upon territories in the Global South, requiring redesigning governance systems that prioritize ecosystem conservation and reframe the distribution schemes of environmental costs and benefits from an intergenerational and transnational equity perspective.

Another fundamental challenge in transitioning to what would be an ecocentric State is that we require a change in power distribution within governance systems, where decentralization in decision-making cannot be limited to a simple transfer of competencies from national to subnational governments (Ballbé & Martínez, 2003). Therefore, it is essential to adopt a polycentric approach involving multiple actors (Ostrom, 1972), starting from local communities to supranational bodies, ensuring that decisions are made based on the specific knowledge of each territory and in accordance with the respect for their ecological dynamics.

In this context, materializing the concept of dual sovereignty, both in federal and unitary States (Ballbé & Martínez, 2003), must translate into a model where local structures have the real capacity to manage their natural resources with autonomy and ecological responsibility principles. This allows us to strengthen local environmental governance capacities and ensure greater democratization in the management of common goods, enabling communities to become active guardians of their territories and ecosystems.

In practice, these new understandings must translate into:

Institutionally:

- Deep transformations of the paradigms on which we base public policies and regulations concerning environmental (now ecological) matters.
- Rethinking Society-State-Nature relationships.
- Correlating ecological health and human well-being as pillars of ecocentric security, assuming this new paradigm.
- Overcoming contradictions, or at least minimizing them, between the social rule of law, which would become an ecocentric state, and neoliberal policies.

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- Integrating ecological justice principles into our economic policies to recognize and compensate for the disproportionate impacts suffered by the most vulnerable communities and territories affected by extractive devastation, and therefore, their socioecological impacts.

In Governance:

- The essential strengthening of true decentralization in decision-making starting from a polycentric approach involving multiple actors and levels of governance, recognizing dual sovereignty (national and subnational), in both federal and unitary States.
- Betting on a glocalized understanding of ecological realities and problems, assuming that global decisions impact territories and communities, no matter how remote they may seem, but also acknowledging that the damage and impacts they suffer, the ecosystem degradation, and the socioecological conflicts they face, influence global realities.
- Policies adapted to the needs and ecological conditions of each territory, greater participation of local communities in the management and protection of their natural resources and ecosystems, in accordance with their cultural and ecological values.

In Regulation:

- Regulatory frameworks that transcend anthropocentrism, giving way to ecocentric models recognizing and guaranteeing the Rights of Nature.
- Enacting laws and regulations that, in addition to protecting Human Rights, recognize the Rights of Nature and guarantee their legal representation.
- Educational strategies fostering an Earth or ecological ethic, a broad justice encompassing the needs and rights of present and future generations and other living beings.
- Reviewing our economic and political priority systems and renewing our commitment to equity and sustainability principles.

Additionally, from a regulatory perspective, we must advance in consolidating an ecocentric paradigm that demands creating new regulatory frameworks transcending the anthropocentric conception of law and opening the door to broader comprehensions involving Nature as a subject of rights. These should address the need for designing laws and mechanisms guaranteeing their justiciability (Boyd, 2017), allowing rivers, forests, and other natural elements with which we coexist to be represented in courts whenever required and decision-making scenarios, and defend their rights through concrete and effective legal instruments, processes, and procedures (Stone, 1972).

This proposed regulatory change should have the potential to significantly expand the legal landscape in environmental matters, allowing us to consolidate precedents

modifying how societies view their relationship with the environment, thereby ensuring that environmental protection ceases to be a secondary issue and becomes a structural axis of justice and governance, transcending even the public sector to the private sector.

Realistically, amid these aspirational proposals, achieving any transformation of this magnitude requires a profound process of education and social awareness. We must assume that the transition to an ecocentric model extending beyond the State requires us, as citizens, to take an active role in defending the Rights of Nature, understanding that Nature's intrinsic value, sustainability, ecological equity, and an intergenerational ethic are indispensable pillars for progressing as a just society.

For this reason, it is crucial that we work on designing and implementing educational policies fostering this ethic of shared responsibility with the environment, creating participatory spaces promoting inclusive environmental governance that recognizes our own pluridiverse and Nature's pluridiverse perspectives. We must aim for the formation of an ecologically informed citizenry as a necessary component to ensure that the structural reforms proposed are not mere rhetorical exercises but, in community, can be transformed into tangible and sustainable changes in favor of the planet and future generations.

This process of rethinking the development model, redefining regulatory frameworks, and democratizing environmental governance must be transversalized by a clear guiding principle, or perhaps even a mantra: **"Nature cannot continue to be conceived as a mere object of exploitation or an accessory within decision-making."** Its protection, conservation, and restoration must be central in these processes. At all levels, we must ensure ecosystem management is executed using criteria of precaution, prevention, equity, and sustainability (Paris Agreement, 2015), but above all, from an intrinsic value of Nature.

We must internalize that constructing an ecocentric State and economic, consumption, and decision-making models, in general, is ultimately a challenge transcending the legal, political, or institutional realm; we must assume it as a commitment to the survival of life systems on the planet and to creating a justice model recognizing and guaranteeing the rights of all living beings, Nature itself.

If we ask how we got to this point regarding the ecological crisis and new climatic realities, part of the answer must take us to the paradigms upon which our policies and regulations are based and have been built: exploiting Nature without limits and imagining our existence solely on capital and then the individual. Consequently, to bring about a change in perspective, a structural rethinking of our relationships between society, State, and Nature is necessary. Speaking of a new decision-making model must recognize the interdependence between ecological balance and human well-being, elements that can be concluded as pillars of true ecocentric security where the protection of Nature must be a central axis underpinning all other

governance and development areas, surpassing the idea that environmental matters are an isolated area of public policy or merely another corporate policy.

02 The Urgency to Redefine the Relationship Between Humanity and Nature

2.1 Looking Back at History to Become Aware of Interdependence

If we briefly recap the various ways we have related to Nature, we would have to go back to prehistory, where our relationship with the environment was based on subsistence. We could mention the civilizations of ancient Mesopotamia, the Nile Valley, and the Indus, with which we have evidence of deep dependency (Fagan, 2004), and from which a consciousness of balance between use and the availability of present and accessible resources began to be constructed.

In the evolutionary process, this changed with the development of agriculture (Adams, 1981), especially from the Middle Ages with the feudal model, where the land and its natural resources became the primary means for producing food and raw materials, laying the foundations for what would be the transition from feudalism to capitalism, and its subsequent expansive dynamics of growth and industrialization (Laclau, 1978).

Until the start of the capitalist system's development, we could assert that since prehistory, individuals have been aware of the finiteness of natural resources, their limited nature, and especially, their necessity for subsistence. It was the economic model that led to this "ignorance," or rather, to ignoring those limits, making this a historical contradiction concerning its own evolution.

2.2 Recognizing the Colonial Past and Current Neocolonial Dynamics

On the other hand, it is important to advance in recognizing, and then thinking about how to compensate for, the historical debt that developed and industrialized countries have with the countries of the Global South. This debt is not only economic but above all ecological, resulting from centuries of exploitation and utilization where these territories have been viewed as a reserve of natural resources to support Western development.

Historically, colonialism was based on the appropriation and dispossession of territories, where intensive and large-scale exploitation of natural resources and the subordination of indigenous peoples and local communities to extractivist economic systems imposed by colonial powers have devastated ecosystems through deforestation, mining, and monoculture agriculture, among other forms and practices.

Additionally, it left an economic dependency structure that persists to this day and has plunged Southern countries into primary resource-based economic models, which are very convenient for Western development (Coronil, 2000).

We must not forget, recalling arguments like those of Arturo Escobar, that the accumulation of wealth in Global North countries has been largely possible due to the systematic expropriation and exploitation of lands and the commodification of Nature in colonized territories (Escobar, 2014).

We also need to identify and recognize that these dynamics did not end with the formal end of colonialism; they have evolved over time into new neocolonial forms that no longer necessarily involve military occupation or any other form of force, which is perhaps why they are harder to recognize. Now they are exercised through economic, political, and especially technological mechanisms that perpetuate extractivism and the threat to natural resources in peripheral countries, without progress from the major centers of power and developed societies in overcoming this reductionist way of relating to their raw material providers (Dryzek, 2022).

If we want clear examples to observe these dynamics, we just need to look at:

The practices of large multinational mining, agribusiness, and/or oil companies that continue to operate under schemes reproducing colonial extractivist logic, seizing lands and resources in the Global South, and buying the complicity of local governments through co-optation via their business interests and economic power.

Another example could be external debt, free trade agreements, and models of financialization or commodification of Nature, which similarly function as neocolonial tools limiting the sovereignty of Southern countries in managing their ecosystems and resources.

Therefore, thinking about a new globality from the Rights of Nature should lead us to evolve these colonial or neocolonial relational dynamics, to overcome this extractivist vision and recognize the profound and disproportionate impact that Global North activities have on the South. This begins with a change in the development narrative, towards implementing compensation and cooperation policies that promote more equitable and sustainable alternative models that respect and preserve biodiversity and ecological systems within planetary boundaries.

2.3 Risks to Democracy and the Environment

In the current era, democratic systems as we know them face multiple threats emerging from diverse sources and origins, such as the rise of authoritarianism and autocratic forms, corporate capture of political processes and public decision-making, systematic misinformation, media manipulation, and especially, the growing and increasingly deeper social inequality. However, one of the risks we are underestimating is the intersection of these issues and threats with the environmental crisis.

One of the main challenges we face is the instrumentalization of climate change and the ecological crisis by radical sectors of the political spectrum or authoritarian (or trending) or hybrid regimes, which intend to use the environmental emergency as a justification for concentrating power and restricting rights and freedoms. We cannot allow climate security to become an excuse to militarize territories, impose population control measures, and/or restrict the mobilization of communities affected by socioecological conflicts (Taibo, 2022).

Another related issue is the criminalization of environmental leadership, which takes the lives of Earth defenders—a trend that, in many Global South countries, mainly affects indigenous people and activists, who are persecuted, imprisoned, and even killed for resisting extractive projects benefiting political and economic elites, and in many cases, for confronting growing illegal economies, another significant threat to Nature.

According to Global Witness (2024), in 2023, at least 196 Earth and environmental defenders were killed worldwide, raising the total for the period 2012 to 2023 to 2,106 defender assassinations.

In this context of latent threats, it is essential to address and prevent ecofascism that is disguised or camouflaged within environmental policies promoted by the most radical sectors of the political spectrum. These ideologies have the potential to undermine democracies and promote forms of environmental protection that exclude vulnerable populations and perpetuate ecological injustices, which could even legitimize various forms of violence, as evidenced in the origins of Nazism and its purist vision manifested in its environmental protection policies and regulations.

Therefore, we need policies designed to promote inclusion, equity, and the recognition of our pluriversities and those of Nature itself, ensuring that "environmental protection" does not become an excuse or a co-opted tool for discrimination or xenophobia, but rather, reflect a genuine collective effort that benefits all of humanity equitably, and especially the planet.

Finally, in this section on democracies, we should focus on the position we should assign to Nature amidst armed conflicts (Trejo & Patiño, 2018); in our context of growing instability, we should aim for incorporating Nature protection approaches in international law and, in the case of the European Union, in its community law, recognizing Nature as a victim in conflict scenarios and adopting mechanisms to prevent its impacts and harm, which could be irreversible.

Experience, history, and current military conflicts show us that the environment becomes an unrecognized victim of war, so following the example of legal innovations and new recognition parameters, such as in Colombia, where Nature and indigenous peoples have been recognized as victims of armed conflict by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace JEP (2018, 2020), international legal frameworks, the European Union, and the international community in general, must formalize the protection of Nature in these contexts. This is to preserve biodiversity and as a guarantee for maintaining peace and international security by mitigating one of the possible future conflict sources—natural resources.

2.4 New Policies in the Anthropocene

The planetary changes we face due to human intervention mark the transition from the Holocene to the Anthropocene, a concept denoting a new geological era defined by the impact of human activities on Earth within the capitalist framework, especially as a result of its production and consumption forms. This presents us with significant challenges in global environmental policies and regulation since it involves a set of changes and transformations that represent, beyond a geological alteration (which in itself is of impressive magnitude, considering it is the first geological change recorded as a result not of natural processes, but human intervention), a profound transformation of ecosystems and all life forms on the planet, with the capability of posing an imminent risk to human survival and other species (Crutzen, 2006).

This context, viewed through the lenses of responsibility, ecological justice, ecocentric security, and intergenerational ethics, highlights the imperative nature of adopting global and coordinated measures capable of mitigating the effects of geological change. Clearly, this involves starting from a critical review and a real transformation of current policies and regulations that determine how we relate to Nature, access its resources, and inhabit the planet (Kotzé, 2014).

Some key elements of this transition, urging us to act as a priority, include:

- **The dramatic increase in greenhouse gas concentrations.**
- **The acidification of oceans.**
- **Large-scale deforestation.**
- **Accelerated loss of biodiversity.**

All these factors, among others, have the potential to alter ecosystems and our ways of life, destabilizing both human and non-human communities, leading to unpredictable effects in all aspects of life and subsistence, such as food chains, health, the global economy, social stability, peace and security conditions, and existence itself within already surpassed planetary limits.

Therefore, we must rethink the scope of policies and regulations we truly need to address these challenges. These efforts must be comprehensive, with a holistic vision of the causes, problems, and effects of anthropogenic changes, framed in terms of ecocentric security, extending beyond short-term responses or mere point solutions to resolve immediate crises (ignoring the systemic and structural character of these realities).

We urgently need approaches integrating sustainability, conservation, restoration, mitigation, and adaptability transversally and structurally across all economic and

social development policies, redefining legal-political frameworks to internalize environmental costs, promote clean and sustainable technologies, and discourage the proliferation of extractive practices and the expansion of the unlimited growth model.

The design and implementation of policies effectively responding to the transition to the Anthropocene must have profound implications, starting from a necessary paradigmatic change in how societies value and interact with Nature. These new decision models should lead us to recognize that ecological health is inseparable from human health, meaning internalizing the relationship of interdependence with Nature and acknowledging that ecosystem preservation is fundamental for the survival of all forms of life on Earth. These new legal and political frameworks must be proactive to not only mitigate already occurred damage but also adapt to inevitable and rapid changes in our environmental realities, requiring greater investments in research, climate-resilient infrastructure development, education and training, and improved response capacity for an increasingly at-risk population (Steffen, Crutzen & McNeill, 2007).

For this reason, placing Nature at the center of decisions should lead us to long-term planning models that are sufficiently flexible, with the capacity to adapt to new realities, information, and technologies. Thus, it is a priority to bet on issues such as implementing regulations requiring stricter environmental impact assessments, promoting the circular economy, clean and renewable energy, and policies supporting biodiversity conservation—not from an anthropocentric viewpoint but from a broad and guaranteeing perspective towards the Rights of Nature.

We must assume that transitioning to the Anthropocene demands a global reflection on human responsibility towards the planet and its inhabitants (human and non-human), requiring an international collaborative approach capable of overcoming political and economic differences for global common good. Only through a coordinated and committed effort will it be possible to aspire to effective management of the environmental challenges presented by this new geological era within an authentic ecocentric security framework.

In summary, a new way of understanding and feeling-thinking the Humanity-Nature relations, from interdependence and an ecocentric view, involves:

- Surpassing the vision of the Global South as merely a resource reserve for Western development.
- Adopting ecocentric security, materializing it in protection approaches to the Rights of Nature, which should permeate International Environmental Law, Regional Human Rights Protection Systems, the European Union Community Law, each State's legal frameworks, and subnational regulations.
- Recognizing Nature as a victim of armed conflicts and the developmental model of unlimited growth, to preserve biodiversity and as a guarantee for maintaining peace and international security.

- Limiting and transitioning extractive practices and the expansion of capitalism ravaging Nature, promoting deregulation models to establish the "development" myth as a mechanism for natural resource dispossession, and expanding its logic towards "terrains" or non-capitalist spaces, or where Nature is not commodified, or comprehended from alternative worldviews recognizing its intrinsic value.

03 Ecocentrism and Ecological Justice, a Framework of Principles for Decision-Making

Decision-making in environmental matters confronts us, as already explained, with the contemporary challenge of redefining human interaction with Nature. This requires transitioning from an anthropocentric approach to environmental law and the governance and management of natural resources—which has historically treated Nature as a resource warehouse for human exploitation—to a paradigm of ecological justice centered on Nature. This would allow us to address more justly the systemic environmental crises of this era, especially those yet to come, while considering future generations.

Adopting ecological justice as a decision-making framework involves embracing models that value Nature on its own terms, which are theoretically described by Lengieza, Aviste, and Swim (2023) as valuing Nature for Nature (N4N), recognizing its intrinsic interconnection and dependence within a broader ecosystem community. This implies a shift from valuing Nature only for its utility to humans (N4P) to a valuation recognizing Nature as a community (NAC), a perspective shift that will facilitate designing and implementing policies, regulations, and even private sector decision-making that respect ecological autonomy, promote the health, stability, and integrity of ecosystems long-term, regardless of the direct benefits this might represent for humanity (which clearly exist as ecological value increases and environmental conditions improve where we develop our own existence) (Lengieza, Aviste & Swim, 2023).

Moreover, it is crucial to overcome the dominant narratives of Western developmentalism that have justified environmental exploitation in the name of economic progress. Thus, detaching from neoliberal practices perpetuating cycles of capitalist over-accumulation through dispossession, as David Harvey (2017) suggests, requires a critical and change-oriented review of the development concept and its impact on natural ecosystems, especially in the Global South. Instead of perpetuating an unsustainable growth model, policies and decision-making should foster alternative development models prioritizing sustainability and ecological equity, in alignment with the Rights of Nature.

National, transnational, and supranational legal frameworks, along with public and private policies guiding our decisions, must be redefined to reflect a genuine commitment to ecological justice. This involves incorporating principles of

responsibility, cooperation, prevention, and precaution from an ecocentric perspective, expanding their scope beyond preventing environmental harm to actively promoting ecosystem health, improving their conditions, and especially recognizing Nature as a rights holder.

In this sense, human dignity as we understand it must be recontextualized within this framework, acknowledging that long-term life and the well-being of human populations are intrinsically linked to the vitality of natural environments. But recognition is not enough; it must be the guideline orienting our decisions and upon which we can build a global consensus on priorities for life, for the planet—a common global commitment to ensure a sustainable and equitable future. This allows us to rethink the metrics and how we understand growth and development, and with new global solidarity, commit to valuing and protecting the natural world.

04 Conclusions: A Framework for Action

It is clear, then, that to rethink how we make environmental decisions or those that might generate socioecological impacts—whether in the realm of regulation, public policy, or private, corporate (or even personal) decisions—it is essential to adopt an approach that recognizes and actively promotes and defends the Rights of Nature from an ecocentric security perspective. This means not merely speaking of formal recognition but material and enforceable in all its dimensions, an effort that must start from the reconceptualization of managing the interactions between human societies and ecological systems, prioritizing the long-term well-being of Nature as a biotic unit and a setting for the materialization of rights, including human rights.

It is crucial to integrate effective tools for characterizing and recognizing socioecological conflicts, arising from our activities and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources. This requires detailed analysis to understand the dynamics and interdependencies within natural and social systems. The analysis of how we make decisions should lead us to evaluate the influence of institutions, organizations, entities (public and private), and social norms on managing and sustaining these systems, as suggested by Elinor Ostrom (1990) in her analytical framework for socioecological systems sustainability. These understandings provide a solid basis for developing more effective policies and decisions that respect the principles of ecological justice.

In terms of environmental policy, it is necessary for the State and civil society to offer firm guarantees for the exercise of environmental leadership and provide legitimate spaces for influence and consensus, facilitating active participation of affected communities and social movements in environmental decision-making within a framework of environmental democracy. Participation, both individual and collective, is not just a right; it enriches the formulation process of policies and regulations by incorporating diverse perspectives and local knowledge, which is vital for effective

and sustainable natural resource management connected to the realities of communities and territories.

Internationally, we must improve our capacities to reach explicit commitments and concrete actions to support the defense of areas of ecological interest, especially in the Global South (territories historically affected by development dynamics and concentrate the majority of global biodiversity). Support can manifest in various forms of cooperation, funding for conservation projects, restoration, sustainable development, or fostering alternative models, strengthening environmental governance capacities, legal assistance, global actions aimed at promoting a new scale of valuation of Nature, but above all, genuine efforts to protect the rights of communities and ecosystems against the proliferation of extractive and exploiting interests that even disregard planetary limits, which destroy not only natural resources but also the rights of future generations.

These new Nature-centered decision-making logics must firmly oppose the privatization of natural resources and prioritize common, global, and intergenerational interest over economic benefits guaranteeing capital over-accumulation for a few. Instead, policies should promote their community and public management, ensuring their use and exploitation are sustainable and equitable, rejecting market logics that see Nature merely as a consumable and exploitable good, not as a life community whose integrity must be protected for the well-being of all beings integrated within it.

Making decisions for life, centered on the planet and our own subsistence, will be easier from a global and ecocentric approach that must be holistic and inclusive, ensuring that natural resource management and environmental protection are carried out with a vision of justice, intergenerational ethics, and long-term sustainability, as an essential condition for preserving biodiversity, protecting ecosystems for their intrinsic value, and guaranteeing a dignified and sustainable life for all communities, especially those most affected by crises and environmental impacts.

Furthermore, from a legal perspective, it is urgent to halt the dynamics of environmental deregulation that have allowed and fostered the rampant exploitation of natural resources, advocating for the consolidation of solid and robust legal frameworks protecting Nature from continuous aggressions and also recognizing and guaranteeing its rights explicitly and effectively, accompanied by a global commitment to form a common front capable of resisting neoliberalism pressures and market forces favoring natural resource commodification.

It is also essential to deepen strategies for overcoming environmental inequalities, intensifying measures with special attention to existing gaps between the Global North and South, and among the most vulnerable populations. This involves making public and private decisions that not only recognize global ecosystem interdependence but also address and resolve historical and current injustices that have condemned certain regions and communities to greater risk and vulnerability situations.

As a global community, we must aim to construct regulations and policies determining our relationship with Nature, from an epistemic framework recognizing our pluridiversities and those of our territories, promoting a deeper and critical analysis of environmental problems. This should lead us to redefine traditional anthropocentric and developmental cooperation forms and trade relations towards commitments based on an ecopolitical understanding that recognizes and respects the specific dynamics and needs of each territory, its ecosystems, and communities, with full awareness of their realities, limits, and needs.

Finally, we must not forget that placing Nature at the center of decision-making will be more effective as we progress towards global recognition of Nature as a subject of rights, establishing clear and effective limits on extractivism, creating regulations that restrict uncontrolled and unlimited natural resource extraction, ensuring that any extractive activity is conducted within a framework respecting the Rights of Nature and guarantees long-term sustainability, within planetary boundaries and capacities.

I would like to invite whoever reads this document to reflect on the following ideas:

What does an ecocentric model of decision-making based on Nature entail?

At a minimum, an authentic framework of ecological justice for decision-making:

Transition from an anthropocentric approach to environmental law to a paradigm of ecological justice centered on Nature.

Valuing Nature for Nature (N4N) or Nature as Community (NAC).

Intrinsic interconnection and dependence within a broader ecosystem community. Ecological autonomy.

Overcome the dominant narrative of neoliberal developmentalism.

Policies that promote alternative models and prioritize sustainability and ecological equity, aligned with the Rights of Nature.

Commitment to ecological justice.

Incorporate principles of responsibility, cooperation, prevention, and precaution from an ecocentric perspective.

Recontextualize human dignity.

A new global solidarity and international, regional, and local governance of natural resources and conservation within a framework of Rights of Nature and ecological justice.

Rethink growth metrics and the idea of development.

And then, how to put Nature at the center of decisions?

1. Proactive regulation:

- Firm opposition to the privatization of natural resources.
- Prioritize common interest and future generations' interest.
- Promote community and public management.
- A global and ecocentric approach, holistic and inclusive, with a vision of intergenerational justice and sustainability.

2. Guarantees:

- Exercise of Environmental leadership.
- Legitimate spaces for influence, participation, and consensus in environmental decision-making.
- Environmental democracy.

3. Ecological Justice:

- Effective tools for characterizing and recognizing socioecological conflicts.
- Policies, regulations, and decisions cannot be just or effective if they do not incorporate the needs and rights of natural systems and all life forms.
- Recognize the ecosystem rights to exist, thrive, and regenerate, along with a framework of obligations for states, society, and corporations.

4. Ecocentric Security:

- Recognition and justiciability of the Rights of Nature.
- Transition from neoliberal anthropocentrism that generates socioecological conflicts to an ecocentric and holistic vision redefining the Person-State-Nature relationship.
- Imposing real barriers to extractivism, within planetary limits and capacities.

5.Changes in the International Context:

- Explicit commitment to defending areas of ecological interest.
- Technical cooperation, funding for conservation, restoration, and sustainable development projects, and various forms of generating alternatives to traditional development models based on unlimited growth and exploitation.
- Halt deregulation as it fosters rampant exploitation of natural resources.
- Form a common front to resist neoliberalism pressures and market forces favoring the commodification of Nature.

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