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Information on the debate:

„The New Path of World Development. The Club of Rome Programme”

which took place on the 22nd of March 2010 at the

Polish Economic Society headquarters at Nowy Świat 49 in Warsaw

The introduction to the debate:

Prof. Zdzisław Sadowski, Honorary President of the Polish Economic Society

The debate was led by:

Prof. Antoni Kukliński, President of the Polish Society for Co-operation with the Club of Rome

In his address Prof. Z. Sadowski presented the new programme of the 40 year old Roman Club. The programme demonstrates new vision of world development providing improvement of life in conditions of constantly growing population, increasing climatic dangers and constant disintegration of eco-system. The programme has been classified into five topical blocks. The first block covers issues of natural environment and resulting threats including breakdown of eco-system and end of crude oil and fresh water resources. The second block covers issues of globalisation with such adverse effects like deepening interdependence between countries, growing inequality, migrations and financial disequilibrium. The third block involves global development, the growth of population being the main subject. Social transformation constitutes

the fourth block with issues of global society including value systems, ethics, religion, culture, customs, and gender equality etc. The last block covers peace and security realized through social justice, democracy, solidarity and adequate state governance.

So far, the works on climatic changes are the most advanced. In 2009, the so-called Amsterdam Declaration was adopted, forming a part of preparations for the UN Copenhagen Climate Conference devoted to issues of climate disturbances. The postulates of the Conference involve increased taxation of raw materials, new models of development and globalisation, and stress the value of natural capital and ecological services. The declaration lists the dangers involving wasteful consumption habits, ineffective and extravagant production systems, ill-managed financial institutions and weak, vulnerable government structures. It was postulated to consider funding for reduction of energy and raw materials not as costs but as investments for future generations. There were warnings against return to the pre-crisis path of growth possibly leading to further crises. It was also postulated to introduce a new index of economic growth. The Amsterdam Conference is important in that it treats the present problems in a comprehensive way dealing not only with the crisis of economy but with crises of eco-system, social relations and other issues as well.

The new human well-being index involves such indices like life expectancy, life satisfaction and environmental impact of economic activities. The new index combines input of natural resources into production with life expectancy and life satisfaction. In 1990 the index was highest for China but was falling in the following years despite the rising growth rate possibly due to growing natural environment contamination. The index was low for the United States and falling although at a slow pace. The human well-being index gradually increases in the Western Europe. It is worth mentioning that the works on new indices have been underway for a couple of decades and none of these indices have become a prevailing one and it is not sure whether the new index is adopted this time.

Over the discussion, the GDP growth rate as a growth and social welfare index was criticised, but it was also said that most probably it will not be replaced. It was also stressed that the 40 year long tradition of the Club of Rome produced rather poor results in correcting mechanisms of global development. On the other hand the works of the Club of Rome have considerably improved general knowledge about ecology. The disputants stressed the never ending search for answers to the same old questions, that we have not moved forward, that the

proposed indices are not reliable and that everything has been going over and over again. The Club of Rome will most probably not produce a breakthrough but the Club gave rise to the development of many organizations much stronger than the Club itself and these organizations may produce a breakthrough. It was also said that while assuming a common attitude towards issues of social transformation we may face difficulties resulting from considerable regional differences in ethics, religion and other issues.