

Rok Kralj



# Meditations on the Sharing Economy



e-book

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The book *Meditations on the Sharing Economy* is a translation of the Slovenian work titled [Meditacije o ekonomiji delitve](#). During the translation process, it became clear that some additional content and changes were necessary. Consequently, the text you see before you is not only a translation but also stands as an independent book in its own right.

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**To the millions upon millions of brothers and sisters**  
who suffer from deprivation amidst a world of plenty —  
a heartbreaking consequence

of our complacency and indifference.

Where is the love that unites us and moves us to cooperate?

Where is the heart that inspires us to share?

Where is the will that compels us to act?

*“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”*

– Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>1</sup>

*“After so many years of political inaction, only the massed goodwill of ordinary people can bring about an end to poverty in a world of plenty through enormous and continual protests across all countries. So let’s take the path of least resistance and jointly herald the long-agreed human rights of Article 25—for adequate food, housing, healthcare and social security for all. This is the surest route for impelling our governments to redistribute resources and restructure the global economy.”*

– Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi<sup>2</sup>

*“Without sharing there can be no justice; without justice there can be no peace; without peace there can be no future.”*

– Maitreya the World Teacher<sup>3</sup>

The sharing economy aims to meet everyone’s basic needs and enhance human well-being while protecting the environment. If the focus shifts away from these goals—such as towards profit-seeking or accumulating wealth—it can no longer be regarded as the genuine sharing economy.

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# About meditations

Although the word *meditation* carries multiple meanings, we focus here on its Latin origin, *meditari*, meaning “to think, contemplate, devise, or ponder.”<sup>4</sup> In this context, meditation implies thoughtful consideration, deep reflection, and contemplation. Building on this understanding of meditation, we turn to the sharing economy—seeking to uncover its essence, meaning, underlying principles, and relevance in today’s world.

We will explore the topic from several complementary angles to shed light on its many dimensions. This will enable us to move beyond one-sided dogmas and ideologies that dominate modern economic reality—ideologies often designed to serve the interests of the most powerful and affluent individuals and nations.

Understanding the sharing economy does not require prior knowledge of conventional economics. Such knowledge can sometimes be more of a hindrance than a help. Economics is not a separate discipline reserved for specialists; it is a vital part of everyday life, profoundly shaping our families and communities.

Human beings are inherently economic beings. The question of surviving using the available goods and resources—often in challenging circumstances—is universal. It applies to individuals, every human community, and other living beings. After all, we are all consumers, producers, workers, entrepreneurs, and owners. In one way or another, each of us is part of an economic system inseparably connected to society.

The modern economic system—built on competition, selfishness, and greed—is not the product of some higher power or natural law. It is a human construct designed primarily to serve the most powerful individuals and nations. And if we created it, we have the power to change it.

We need to consider whether the economic activities we demonstrate—through businesses, banks, shops, and other institutions—truly reflect our inner values, beliefs, and aspirations. Or have we merely conformed to a brutal and unjust world, pursuing self-interest and personal gain, even though we know, deep down, that it is wrong?

Perhaps the time has come to envision an economic system based on the inner qualities and values<sup>5</sup> we already demonstrate in our households—qualities such as compassion, care, cooperation, and the natural inclination to share. We should extend what we practice within our families to our local communities, states, and humanity as a whole. A more compassionate economic system is not just possible; it is essential.

We must reflect on these topics consciously and carefully. We do not wish the sharing economy to become another static and dogmatic ideology. Everyone participates in the economic system, and thus, we all share the right and the responsibility to co-create it. There may be many paths, but the goal is one: the well-being of all people and the planet. Our voices and actions matter.

These meditations are not rigid definitions. They may be read independently or as a whole. Key ideas are intentionally repeated to illuminate them from different angles. May they serve as a source of insight, provoke fresh perspectives, and—above all—inspire action.

## Opening meditation

*“Our human civilisations would never have survived since the first known hominins unless we practised sharing on an interpersonal and communal basis. It is, indeed, an evolutionary trait that behavioural scientists and anthropologists have long recognised as intrinsic to our essential nature.” (Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi<sup>6</sup>)*

As we begin to explore the idea of the sharing economy, it is helpful to reflect on the meaning of the term *sharing*. Let’s start with some general definitions:

*“Sharing is the joint use of a resource or space. It is also the process of dividing and distributing. In its narrow sense, it refers to joint or alternating use of inherently finite goods, such as a common pasture or a shared residence. Still more loosely, 'sharing' can actually mean giving something as an outright gift: for example, to 'share' one's food really means to give some of it as a gift. Sharing is a basic component of human interaction, and is responsible for strengthening social ties and ensuring a person's well-being.”<sup>7</sup>*

*“To share something is to use it or enjoy it with others, like when people share a cake at a birthday party. The adjective sharing has a related meaning, but the focus is more on unselfishness. A sharing person might try to divide up not just the cake, but also all the food in his refrigerator — just to be sure everyone is fed.”<sup>8</sup>*

Communication is also a process of sharing. For example, when you tell someone about an upcoming concert, you share that information without losing it yourself. A teacher does not transfer knowledge as if it were a physical object, but rather shares it—knowledge remains with the teacher while becoming part of the student’s understanding.

From the very beginning, a mother shares her body with her unborn child. In families and households, sharing forms the foundation of our most basic economic relations. Life itself is inseparably linked to sharing: we share language, culture, customs, and habits, as well as genetic material and biological processes. We also share the atmosphere, water, and ultimately the Earth—our common home.

By its nature, sharing is a unifying force and a fundamental aspect of human life. At its core, sharing affirms the truth that each and every one of us is inseparable from the greater whole – humanity. It defines the right relationship between the individual (the human being) and the collective (humanity). Sharing makes the harmonious functioning of the whole possible. One humanity can only be realized through the act of sharing.

## The principle of sharing and the sharing economy

To better understand this topic, it is essential to distinguish between sharing as a principle and its practical application—the sharing economy. A principle can be defined as *“a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning. Principles provide a guide for behavior or evaluation”*.<sup>9</sup>

The principle of sharing shapes and directs our thoughts, emotions, and actions, while the sharing economy is an organised and structured expression of this principle. Sharing is also closely related to another essential principle: cooperation.

We are especially familiar with the principle of sharing within our families, where it forms the foundation of our relationships. It arises naturally from compassion and love for those closest to us; therefore, we share resources spontaneously and willingly.

When our economic institutions and society begin to embody the principles of sharing and cooperation, just as families do, we will have laid the foundation for peace and sustainable development.

In summary, sharing is a principle: a fundamental guide for our thinking and behaviour. The sharing economy is the manifestation of that principle within economic and social systems.

## Goods, resources, and the commons

To deepen our understanding of the sharing economy, we must consider several foundational economic concepts—goods, resources, and the commons. Although our approach is not strictly economic, these terms are central to our discussion.

*“In economics, goods are anything that is good, usually in the sense that it provides welfare or utility to someone.”*<sup>10</sup> At its core, the economy is concerned with producing and distributing the goods and services people need to live and thrive. These include essential goods such as food, clothing, housing, healthcare, social services, and education.

Our focus will be primarily on goods, which also include services—intangible goods. Medical care, for instance, is a service which depends on physical infrastructure—such as buildings, equipment, and supplies. Therefore, when we speak of goods, we also refer to services.

A broader concept than goods is that of resources. Resources encompass all inputs needed to produce goods. They fall into three main categories:

- Natural resources - include land, water, minerals, forests, oil, seeds, crops, and energy.
- Human resources - include labour, skills, and knowledge.
- Financial resources - include money, capital, and investment.

Without resources, we could not produce goods. Both are essential for human life and development—goods are direct and immediate in meeting human needs, while resources are the means by which those goods are produced.

From the individual's perspective, we speak of goods—material things and immaterial services—that meet basic needs. From a broader, systemic viewpoint, resources are more relevant. Both terms are used in this text.

The broadest of the three concepts is 'the commons'. The commons include everything that directly or indirectly benefits humanity: air, land, oceans, rivers, lakes, minerals, and humanity's collective cultural and intellectual heritage. In the broadest sense, Earth itself is our shared commons.

Mohammed Mesbahi said that the human being, at its core, is also a commons:

*"We might say that one's inner self is the most fundamental commons, and the infinite process of spiritual evolution is the basis of all the commons that exists. Dwelling in the peaceful solitude of your inner self is a commons that you are born with, and it will always remain within you."*<sup>11</sup>

The commons are the birthright of every human being—they are the foundation for our existence and development, as well as for all other living beings. The commons should therefore be treated with care and used equitably and sustainably—as economic resources that can be transformed into goods and services benefiting all.

# Part 1: Meditations on the sharing economy

1. The economy is a domain of society that must create the conditions necessary to meet everyone's basic needs and ensure the well-being of humanity, including care for the environment.
2. Basic human needs include food, clothing, housing, medical care, social services, and education. These are fundamental human rights.
3. The commons of humanity is the foundation for the resources, goods, and services essential to meeting basic human needs and ensuring the well-being of humanity. They must be managed with care, responsibility, and sustainability.
4. Commercialization, which encourages competitiveness, self-interest, greed, and complacency, dominates modern economic and social thinking. It contributes significantly to widening social disparities and deepening economic inequality.
5. Global economic inequality lies at the heart of many interconnected crises humanity faces today, including hunger, poverty, migration, war, and the climate crisis.
6. Sharing and cooperation stand in direct opposition to commercialization and form the foundational principles of the sharing economy.
7. Charity cannot replace a just economic system. The sharing economy is based on justice, not charity.
8. The sharing economy encompasses diverse sharing activities at different levels, with a particular focus on the global level. Its purpose is to meet the basic needs of all people, ensure the well-being of humanity, and protect the environment.
9. Through the sharing economy, humanity can thrive in prosperity, mutual respect, and peace, united as one large family sharing a common home—planet Earth.
10. The sharing economy marks the beginning of a profound inner and outer transformation of humanity, founded on right human relations.

# 1. Economy

**The economy is a domain of society that must create the conditions necessary to meet everyone's basic needs and ensure the well-being of humanity, including care for the environment.**

Politics governs and coordinates the various domains of society—such as the economy, medical care, education, culture, and more. It integrates these domains into a coherent and functional whole, whether at the level of a local community, a city, a nation-state, or the global level. The economy<sup>12</sup> is one of these domains, yet it plays a unique role: to ensure the provision of goods and resources essential not only for individual survival but also for the flourishing of the entire society.

Politics and the economy should not be viewed as separate spheres, as their objectives often align. Their shared goal is the overall well-being of society. Symbolically, politics and economy can be seen as the 'father and mother' of society—whether a family, a community, a nation, or the world—jointly responsible for the welfare of all their members.

Today's economic system is highly efficient at producing goods, yet it fails dramatically in distributing them equitably. Widespread hunger and poverty persist—not because of a lack of resources, but due to a profoundly unjust global distribution of wealth. Moreover, the system's intense competitiveness harms the environment and the countless living beings with which we share the Earth.

Some economists and politicians frequently invoke the phrase “*survival of the fittest*”, allegedly a natural law, to justify this competitive economic order. Yet even Charles Darwin, the father of evolutionary theory, wrote in *The Descent of Man* (1871):

*“Those communities which included the greatest number of the most sympathetic members would flourish best and rear the greatest number of offspring.”*<sup>13</sup>

It is no coincidence that the ancient Greek word for economy—*oikonomia*<sup>14</sup>—is rooted in the concepts of home and family. *Oikos* refers to the household and its property, while *nomos* (law) implies management or stewardship. In its original sense, the economy meant the careful management of resources—of both the home and its environment—to sustain the life and well-being of the family.

When extended to a broader scale, *oikos* may be understood as the local community, the country, or even the entire planet—and the economy becomes the stewardship of collective well-being. Thus, the economy is not merely about wealth or trade; it is about caring for the human family and its shared home, the Earth.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. Basic human needs

**Basic human needs include food, clothing, housing, medical care, social services, and education. These are fundamental human rights.**

Every person needs, at a minimum, adequate nutrition (including clean drinking water), clothing, housing, medical care, social security, and education to survive and thrive. These essential needs are formally recognized in international law, most notably in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

*“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”<sup>16</sup>*

Article 26 of the same declaration affirms the right to education, which is also a fundamental human need. In the modern world, without at least a basic education, an individual cannot become completely independent or fully realize their potential as a human being.

*“Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”<sup>17</sup>*

When these basic needs are not met, the consequences are devastating: suffering, hunger, preventable disease, and even death. People deprived of life’s essentials often experience humiliation, social exclusion, and violence. Instead of learning, working, or developing their potential, they are forced to devote their time and energy to mere survival. They live in constant uncertainty, often unsure where their next meal will come from. Such conditions can drive individuals into exploitative labour, perilous migration, or even crime—not out of choice but out of sheer desperation.

Meeting basic human needs is the foundation of well-being—for both individuals and society. True well-being means that everyone’s needs are met, without barriers and that all people can lead a peaceful, safe and healthy life.

Beyond material necessities, well-being also encompasses health, education, social inclusion, a clean environment, access to quality public services, and personal growth and happiness opportunities.

To capture this broader vision, some countries now use indicators such as *Gross National Happiness (GNH)*<sup>18</sup>—pioneered in Bhutan—which assess not only economic performance but also spiritual, cultural, social, and environmental well-being. GNH is defined as a “multidimensional development approach seeking to achieve a harmonious balance between material well-being and the spiritual, emotional and cultural needs of society.”<sup>19</sup>

As His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Bhutan's leader, said: *“To me, GNH is simply development with values.”*<sup>20</sup>

How can we speak of real development today when a large part of humanity still suffers from a lack of basic necessities? Today, development is nothing more than rampant and destructive economic growth without any human values. Can we even call that development?

Meeting basic human needs is, therefore, not merely an economic or social objective—it is the moral and practical foundation of a just society and a thriving humanity. It is also the economy's most essential and urgent task.

### 3. The commons of humanity

**The commons of humanity is the foundation for the resources, goods, and services essential to meeting basic human needs and ensuring the well-being of humanity. They must be managed with care, responsibility, and sustainability.**

The commons encompasses all that meets basic human needs and supports human well-being and development. In this context, the concept of the commons can be meaningfully connected to *oikos*, the root of the word *economy* (from Ancient Greek *oikonomia*). *Oikos* “is a Greek word that refers to the family, the family's property, and the home”.<sup>21</sup> It represents the foundation of survival and prosperity for both the household and its members.

In its broadest sense, *oikos* can be understood as both humanity (the family) and the Earth (the home), together with all its wealth—that is, the commons (the shared property of humanity).

The second part of the word *economy*, *nomos*, means 'law' or 'management'. It implies the wise and responsible stewardship of shared resources for the benefit of the entire household—or, more broadly, for all of humanity.

It is also important to note that the word *ecology* originates from the same root, *oikos*, combined with *logos*, meaning 'study' or 'discourse'. The term *ecology* was coined in 1866 by the German scientist Ernst Haeckel. It was originally defined as “the natural science of the relationships among living organisms and their environment.”<sup>22</sup> Today, ecology also encompasses the protection and care of the environment, which we can understand as *oikos* in its broadest sense—the entire planet.<sup>23</sup>

**Thus, the true purpose of the economy is to wisely manage (*nomos*) the commons—the Earth and its wealth (*oikos*)—for the common good<sup>24</sup> of the human family.**

The commons includes not only natural elements such as land, oceans, rivers, forests, minerals, and the atmosphere but also humanity's heritage, such as cultural and architectural heritage, knowledge, and skills.

However, the commons does not usually directly satisfy human needs. They become economic resources when used to produce goods and services that meet essential needs. A simple illustration:

- Food products, such as bread, rice, vegetables, fruits, and dairy, are goods that meet human needs, supported by trade, transportation, and other services.
- To produce these food products (goods), we need resources such as land, seeds, water, and energy—all of which originate in the commons.

In other words, the commons is humanity's shared wealth transformed into economic resources used to produce goods that satisfy basic needs. However, the boundaries between commons, resources, goods, and services are often blurred in practice.

As commons is transformed into economic resources, they often become property—owned by individuals, companies, or governments. This is not inherently problematic as long as the fundamental goal remains the satisfaction of human needs and the well-being of all.

However, in today's world, natural and social resources are increasingly being used for private profit rather than for the common good—a trend known as the commercialization of the commons.

Commons that rightfully belongs to all of humanity are increasingly being reduced to market commodities—bought, sold, and manipulated for profit. The consequences are severe: hunger, poverty, and environmental degradation. Commercialisation is not merely harmful—it is profoundly destructive.

The sharing economy offers an alternative: an approach that places the commons—and the economic resources derived from them—at the service of human needs and planetary well-being. It seeks to ensure that humanity's true wealth—the commons—is used to produce and fairly distribute the goods and services that sustain life and support its flourishing.

## 4. Commercialisation

**Commercialisation, which encourages competitiveness, self-interest, greed, and complacency, dominates modern economic and social thinking. It contributes significantly to widening social disparities and deepening economic inequality.**

To understand the prevailing meaning of today's global economy, it is essential to explore the phenomenon of commercialisation—a mindset shaped by the growing influence of market forces. Commercialization creates both external and internal conflicts—war, as discussed by Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi in his publication, *Commercialization: The Antithesis of Sharing*:

*"In truth, commercialisation is nothing less than a silent war, a war against humanity's growth and evolution. This statement cannot be emphasised strongly enough: commercialisation is a war. Not just a war between different sides, between competing nations or rival tribes, but a war in itself. It is a war that is being waged within every household, community and nation because commercialisation is so devious, so intelligent, that it precisely knows the weaknesses of humanity. It knows our emotional nature intimately well because this is where it resides, and from where it manipulates us."*<sup>25</sup>

The word *commerce* comes from the Latin *commercium*,<sup>26</sup> a combination of *com* (together) and *merx* (merchandise). Throughout history, the trading of goods has been an essential human activity. Trade fostered connection and cooperation among communities; it led to the creation of markets, the invention of money, and the emergence of complex economic and social systems.

In recent decades, however, trade has expanded beyond the economic sphere and evolved into a worldview—a way of thinking that treats nearly all goods, resources, and human activities as means to generate profit. This is the essence of commercialisation.

Today, virtually everything is commodified and subjected to commercialisation. Not only goods and services, but also natural resources, public institutions, knowledge, culture, human relationships, and even human beings, are being turned into commodities to be bought or sold on the market.

While profit has historically been an inherent aspect of trade, in today's world, it has become the overriding purpose, not just of commerce but of nearly all economic and even social activity. It is no longer about earning a decent living but about generating continuous and ever-increasing profit, often disconnected from real human needs. Wealth accumulation has become an end in itself, and in the process, some of the most destructive human tendencies—greed, selfishness, and hyper-competitiveness—have been amplified.

Commercialisation has now permeated nearly every aspect of life. It has infiltrated healthcare, education, housing, food and water supply, culture, nature, and even our intimate relationships. The profit motive influences decisions at every level of society, frequently at the expense of compassion, fairness, and human dignity.

Consider the following:

- Nearly 800 million people are hungry in a world with more than enough food. Yet food is traded on financial markets as a speculative commodity. Meanwhile, celebrity chefs earn fortunes preparing luxury meals. Is this not grotesque?
- Around half of the global population doesn't have access to basic medical care. Preventable diseases cause immense suffering and countless avoidable deaths.
- Housing has become a speculative asset, pushing millions out of the market. Young people cannot afford homes, to gain independence or start families, while entire neighbourhoods are converted into tourist rentals and profit-driven accommodations.

These are direct consequences of commercialisation. Human suffering is rationalised as 'economic reality', while profit is exalted above all else.

Commercialization fosters not only greed and competition but also indifference and complacency. It isolates us, making us self-centred and focused on personal gain while blinding us to the suffering of others. This distortion of our values erodes the social fabric, leading to a deepening global inequality that becomes increasingly dangerous.

It is essential to recognize that this situation is not inevitable. Commercialisation is a mindset—a dangerous one—but it is a mindset we have the power to change. Sharing is the noble path away from the edge of the abyss to which commercialisation has brought us.

## 5. Global economic inequality

**Global economic inequality lies at the heart of many interconnected crises humanity faces today, including hunger, poverty, migration, war, and the climate crisis.**

Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote as far back as 1755, in his work *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*,<sup>27</sup> that *"it is plainly contrary to the law of nature... that the privileged few should gorge themselves with superfluities, while the starving multitude are in want of the bare necessities of life."* And today, little has changed.

We live in an era that can rightly be called a *polycrisis*. A polycrisis is defined as *"a complex situation in which multiple, interconnected crises converge and amplify one another, creating a predicament that is difficult to manage or resolve."*<sup>28</sup> Challenges such as poverty and hunger, migration, climate change, social conflicts and wars, inflation, energy shortages, political extremism, and other global issues are deeply interconnected—each influencing and reinforcing the others.

At the heart of many of these crises lies a single root cause: the profoundly unjust distribution of the world's resources. While some nations and regions enjoy abundance, others live in scarcity and deprivation. People facing life-threatening conditions are often left with no choice but to migrate, risking everything in search of safety and opportunity. This suffering is not the result of personal failure but of a global economic system that privileges the few at the expense of the many.

Wealthy nations and corporations continue to exploit the resources of poorer countries and regions. After extracting wealth, they build walls and criminalize those who follow its trail. Refugees are often fleeing the crises caused by centuries of extraction, exploitation, and economic domination. The irony is stark: goods and resources cross borders freely, but people in need are labelled 'illegal'.

The current economic system is not designed to meet human needs, but to serve the logic of commercialization and profit maximization. It transforms every resource, service, and social activity into a market commodity and prioritizes profit over human and planetary well-being. This system enriches a small minority while dispossessing the majority. Hunger, migration, armed conflict, and environmental degradation are not isolated problems—they are symptoms of a system structured around inequality and competition.

And yet, there is no actual shortage of resources. The world produces enough essential goods to provide for everyone. What is lacking is not capacity, but fair distribution. The economy—as a vital domain of society—must create the conditions necessary to ensure that everyone's basic needs are met and that human well-being is promoted alongside care for the environment.

We already know what must be done to establish a just economic system. The world's wealth—its goods, services, and resources—must be shared fairly among all people. This requires guaranteeing universal access to life's essentials, regardless of nationality, income, or geography. It is not charity but justice.

Such a transformation cannot be left to the forces of the market. It must become a central aim of economic policy—both at the national level and through international cooperation. A fairer distribution of resources must be institutionalized and safeguarded through public policy, regulation, and global agreements.

The sharing economy offers a compelling and viable alternative. Properly understood, it represents a new paradigm that ensures equitable access to life-sustaining goods and services while protecting the planet. It prioritizes human well-being over profit and fosters cooperation instead of competition.

Unless we address global inequality, we will not be able to resolve the defining challenges of our time: environmental collapse, mass migration, social division, and political instability. The sharing economy is not merely one possible solution—it may be the only sustainable path forward.

## 6. Principles of sharing and cooperation

**Sharing and cooperation stand in direct opposition to commercialisation and form the foundational principles of the sharing economy.**

A principle is *“a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of beliefs or behavior or a chain of reasoning”*<sup>29</sup> that shapes the thoughts and actions of individuals, organisations, and communities. It represents the core values and ideas that guide decision-making.

At the heart of the sharing economy lie the principles of cooperation and sharing. Humanity did not reach its current stage of development through strength alone, but through our capacity to collaborate and share. A newborn, one of the most vulnerable beings, depends on years of care and support before becoming self-sufficient. This intrinsic vulnerability highlights the essential role of communal support—whether provided by the family, household, tribe, local community, or state.

This leads us to a fundamental question: Are humans born to cooperate and share with one another, or to compete and act selfishly, as many economists often suggest? American developmental psychologist Michael Tomasello, in his book *Why We Cooperate*,<sup>30</sup> which is based on research into the behaviour of young children, argues that children are inherently inclined to cooperate, help others, and share. Researchers have found that these capacities are notably absent in our closest animal relatives, the chimpanzees. Tomasello states: *“Children are altruistic by nature, and this is a predisposition that (because children are also naturally selfish) adults attempt to nurture.”*

This innate altruism is closely tied to compassion—our ability to perceive and respond to the suffering of others. It raises an important question: Could an economy itself be compassionate?

The concept of a *compassionate economy* was first introduced by Russian economist Dr. Stanislav Menshikov (1927–2014). In September 1990, he attended the *Art Meets Science and Spirituality in a Changing Economy* conference in Amsterdam. Initially inclined toward the idea of altruism, Menshikov was inspired by the Dalai Lama, who also attended the conference, to embrace the broader and more inclusive notion of compassion in relation to the economy.

Menshikov defined compassion as *“a feeling for the suffering or difficulties of others, causing a wish to help. It is a psychological and religious concept that may be seen as relevant to the field of economics and other humanitarian sciences that study human behaviour and its effect on human welfare and relations between human beings.”*<sup>31</sup>

Therefore, compassion is crucial not only for our relationships but also for human welfare—a responsibility that lies within the economic system. Menshikov wondered why we are unable to apply the principles that govern our relationships within families to the broader economic context: “If the principle of compassion, as a rule, dominates and is recognised as normal within a family, why not apply it to society and the economy?”

Knowing that nearly 800 million people today suffer from hunger should affect us as deeply as the suffering of those closest to us—and inspire us to take meaningful action. Only then can we speak of compassion on a global scale. Only then can we demonstrate that we are, indeed, one humanity. In this sense, the sharing economy is an expression of compassion and love: by sharing goods with one another, we show that we are truly caring and loving human beings. It is our responsibility to take action and make a difference.

Thus, the sharing economy does not merely involve the fair redistribution of goods and services; it embodies the principles of cooperation and sharing, which themselves arise from our inherent compassion. Compassion is the foundation of love. Both emerge within the intimate settings of families and close communities, where acts of care and kindness often arise spontaneously. But true love, like true compassion, is universal—it transcends personal ties and extends to all, making us feel connected and part of a larger whole.

The sharing economy unites us as a global community while honouring our individuality, cultures, traditions, languages, and other unique identities. Commercialisation, by contrast, fragments, isolates, and standardises. Its driving forces—competitiveness, greed, and selfishness—undermine our social bonds and diminish our ability to feel and act on compassion. Commercialisation fosters self-centeredness and indifference toward the suffering of others.

For this reason, the principles of cooperation and sharing—embodied in the sharing economy and rooted in human compassion and love—should become the fundamental rules and guiding values that shape our personal choices and the way our organisations and societies operate.

## 7. Justice, not charity

**Charity cannot replace a just economic system. The sharing economy is based on justice, not charity.**

*“It is justice, not charity, that is wanting in the world”*,<sup>32</sup> wrote British writer, philosopher, and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) in 1792. Her words remain strikingly relevant today, especially in the realm of economics.

According to the *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024*<sup>33</sup> report, between 713 and 757 million people face hunger—meaning that one in every eleven people on Earth is hungry. Furthermore, 28.9% of the global population, or 2.33 billion people, experience moderate or severe food insecurity.

We have built an economic system that enables a small minority to accumulate vast wealth while large segments of the population lack even the most basic resources. This global economic inequality is the direct outcome of an unjust system.

Instead of transforming this system, we rely on charitable organisations to alleviate its consequences. But even the most prominent and best-resourced organisations—such as the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), UNICEF, Save the Children, Doctors Without Borders, and CARE International—cannot solve the problems of hunger and extreme poverty. Charity often sustains the very system it seeks to soften.

Cushioning the worst effects of an unjust economic system helps preserve a destructive and exploitative status quo. Mass protests would soon erupt if all charitable efforts were to cease—whether in the world’s poorest nations or in wealthy industrialised countries—as many people would be left without the bare minimum for survival. Politicians would then have no choice but to enact fundamental reforms.

In this way, wealthy and powerful individuals—politicians, economists, and even ordinary citizens—delegate the immense task of keeping millions of people alive to charitable organisations. These organisations, however, are not equipped to improve lives fundamentally; they merely provide the minimum required for survival. While there are cases where charities have truly helped transform lives, such examples remain the exception, not the rule.

In today’s world, many people struggle with a profound internal contradiction: compassion urges them to help people experiencing poverty, but their charitable acts often unintentionally support the unjust system responsible for that poverty. For some—especially the ultra-wealthy who have profited at the expense of others—donating to charity can ease their conscience while offering only *“crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table”*<sup>34</sup> to those in need.

The proper solution lies in systemic change—particularly in the economic domain. We need a fair economic system that ensures every person can meet their basic needs, live in health, and achieve well-being—fundamental rights of all people on Earth. We must create

sustainable systems of cooperation and sharing so that no one is left without essentials such as food, clean water, medicine, healthcare, adequate housing, and sanitation.

What we need is not charity—but justice. That is why we must advocate the sharing economy.

## 8. The sharing economy

**The sharing economy encompasses diverse sharing activities at different levels, with a particular focus on the global level. Its purpose is to meet the basic needs of all people, ensure the well-being of humanity, and protect the environment.**

*“There is only one route to end poverty and bring balance to this earth, irrespective of how long humanity has ignored this perennial obligation: to cooperatively organise the global economy in order to share the resources of the world, and thence redistribute wealth to where it rightfully belongs.”* (Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi<sup>35</sup>)

Once we embrace the principle of sharing—which is always inseparable from the principle of cooperation—as the foundation for solving key global challenges such as hunger, poverty, migration, environmental degradation, social conflict, and war, the first task will be to ensure that everyone has access to food, clean water, adequate housing, and healthcare. At this stage, it is equally essential to ensure that all children have the opportunity to receive at least a basic education.

This initial phase of the sharing economy will resemble the work of today’s charitable organizations, but governments must also support it. Governments, including their military forces, which possess significant transport and logistical capacities, will play a crucial role in ensuring the efficient distribution of resources. The Marshall Plan, through which the U.S. helped a war-torn Europe recover swiftly after World War II, could be a model for this collaborative effort.

Later, once hunger and extreme poverty have been eradicated—a task that, given the current capacities of developed countries, their militaries, and international humanitarian organizations, could feasibly be accomplished within a year or two—the need for more permanent forms of sharing, particularly at the global level, will become evident.

To this end, an international agency could be established to coordinate the sharing of resources among nations. This phase could parallel the initial efforts to address extreme poverty and hunger. Since we already have an organization representing all the world’s nations—the United Nations (UN)—a new agency could be created within its framework, responsible for coordinating the redistribution of resources between countries. It is important to emphasize that such sharing would focus on redistributing national surpluses, not on sharing personal belongings.

Simultaneously, multiple regional intervention centres could be established worldwide, where essential supplies would be stored for immediate relief in the event of natural or social disasters. This approach would prevent delays associated with mobilizing aid on a case-by-case basis, allowing for swift assistance to vulnerable populations. Moreover, aid could be coordinated and delivered simultaneously from several regional centres, further enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency responses.

Establishing an agency to coordinate global sharing and regional emergency intervention centres would profoundly transform our economic system. Such a system would be simpler, more efficient, and designed to serve the well-being of all people and the planet. Key elements of this transformation could include a fairer tax system, the introduction of a universal basic income, and the provision of accessible public services. Additionally, businesses could be structured to be partially owned by employees and local communities. These are just some of the ideas that could pave the way toward a more equitable and sustainable economic model.

Nations and local communities can develop their approaches to sharing tailored to their traditions, cultures, customs, and levels of development. Similarly, the activities and organizational structures of the sharing economy cannot be predetermined; some may become obsolete over time while new needs and solutions emerge. What remains crucial, however, is to consistently pursue the primary purpose of the sharing economy, especially at the global level: ensuring unhindered access for all people to the goods and services necessary to meet their basic human needs.

The sharing economy highlights what should be the fundamental purpose of any economic system: to meet the basic needs of all people and foster collective well-being, including environmental care. If the existing economic system were truly fulfilling this essential mission, there would be no need to speak of the sharing economy at all.

It is essential to reiterate that the sharing economy is fundamentally oriented toward meeting the basic needs of all people and advancing the well-being of humanity, which necessarily includes maintaining a healthy environment. If the focus shifts away from these goals—such as towards profit-seeking or accumulating wealth—it can no longer be regarded as the genuine sharing economy.

## 9. One humanity and its home

**Through the sharing economy, humanity can thrive in prosperity, mutual respect, and peace, united as one large family sharing a common home—planet Earth.**

If even one person in the world goes hungry or lives in extreme deprivation, none of us can truly claim to live in prosperity or believe that our economic system is successful. Yet we know hundreds of millions suffer from hunger and chronic shortages of life's most basic necessities.

If even a single part of the world's environment is destroyed, carefully tended gardens and protected parks cannot prove that we are caring for our planet. Environmental degradation is happening everywhere, and we must acknowledge it.

If even one country is at war, none of us can genuinely claim to live in peace. We know that armed conflicts continue to devastate many parts of the world.

Why is it so difficult for humanity to live in peace and prosperity? Are we truly so different? Are the differences between us really so profound?

Although people differ from one another, most of these differences are superficial, rooted in language, appearance, beliefs, habits, and customs. They are distinctions largely shaped by culture and history. These differences enrich our shared experience and should be preserved.

At the same time, we all inhabit the same planet, sharing its space, air, water, and other vital resources. We belong to the same species—one could even say the same family. Earth and humanity are both our home and our family. Isn't that a robust foundation for living together and pursuing common goals?

We must cooperate with others and share our collective resources—whether with our immediate neighbours or people in the world's farthest corners. When no one is left to suffer from a lack of basic needs, the mistrust and fear that feed conflict, selfishness, and greed will begin to dissolve.

Humankind is not the absolute owner of the planet and its resources but rather its steward and guardian. Earth's bounty is intended for the benefit of all—not only human beings but also the many other life forms that share this world with us. In this light, sharing resources becomes the most natural form of economic relationship. By embracing sharing—instead of perpetuating an endless economic struggle over limited resources—we can better care for both our fellow human beings and the environment.

We can live side by side, honouring our cultural, tradition, and language differences. At the same time, we are united by a shared responsibility for the home we all depend on—planet Earth and its resources, which are meant for everyone, not just a privileged few.

The Earth is home to the human family—humanity—sharing its resources for the good of all. This simple truth lies at the heart of the sharing economy. With sharing we manifest brotherhood, Oneness.

## 10. The transformation of humanity

**The sharing economy marks the beginning of a profound inner and outer transformation of humanity, founded on right human relations.**

The economic domain forms the foundation of any social community. It ensures the survival and health of all its members while fostering the well-being of the community as a whole. Therefore, it is an integral part of society rather than a separate or independent domain, as some economic experts might suggest.

We are all part of the economic system and bear responsibility for it. Just as interpersonal relationships form the bedrock of any social community, they are equally essential within the economic domain. As noted earlier, economic relations within families—the smallest social units—are based on sharing, cooperation, and compassion. After all, the word *economy* derives from the ancient Greek *oikos*, meaning home or household.

In contrast, relationships in the broader economic sphere are often marked by competition, greed, and self-interest. As a result, we have become deeply divided. Within our families, we show love, compassion, and generosity—we share what we have. Yet in the wider world, we hoard wealth and consume far more than we need, even though we are aware that millions live in extreme poverty or die for lack of basic necessities. We have created an unequal and fragmented world—one that negatively affects us all, regardless of how materially comfortable our lives may be.

Yet we are more connected than it might seem at first sight. Countless things bind us together: the air we breathe, the water we drink, the genes that shape us, the planet we inhabit, the global climate, the languages we speak, the goods we trade, and the knowledge and culture we share. Far more unites us than divides us.

This awareness of our interconnectedness and the unity of life must be reflected in our actions. It is not enough to withdraw into nature, renounce material goods, become self-sufficient, or adopt a minimalist lifestyle. These steps alone will not change the world. However, the situation becomes truly transformative when we connect with others and collectively demand justice for all. As Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi puts it:

*“After so many years of political inaction, only the massed goodwill of ordinary people can bring about an end to poverty in a world of plenty through enormous and continual protests across all countries. So let’s take the path of least resistance and jointly herald the long-agreed human rights of Article 25—for adequate food, housing, healthcare and social security for all. This is the surest route for impelling our governments to redistribute resources and restructure the global economy.”<sup>36</sup>*

The sharing economy, based on the fairer redistribution of resources, does not reject the benefits of material progress. As we begin to share resources, we may also learn to adjust our lifestyles and realign our priorities. Perhaps we do not truly need everything that vast consumer systems—production, trade, marketing, and finance—offer us or even impose upon us.

The values we cultivate within families and small communities—compassion, care, respect, and love—must be extended to the broader society, both locally and globally, with particular emphasis on the economic domain.

The principle of sharing, expressed in practice through the sharing economy, paves the way for both individual and collective transformation. Rather than spending our time shopping and stressfully searching for the "best" products, we could dedicate it to ourselves, to right human relationships, and to the well-being of our communities. At the same time, we must strive for justice within our largest community—humanity itself. Through sharing, we will establish right human relations with others, deepening our connection to all living beings and the natural world.

Let us place Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the center of our awareness and action. Although it was written back in 1948, its message remains powerfully relevant to the task of building a better, fairer world:

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”<sup>37</sup>

Once we implement this 'economic' article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we will begin to understand what right human relations truly mean. Our inner human qualities—compassion, love, and joy—will come alive within society, especially within the economic realm. However, the outer changes required to build the sharing economy will be impossible unless we are inwardly prepared for them.

*“A spiritual and holistic understanding of the sharing economy therefore means that we are no longer dividing ourselves from the rest of humanity, either inwardly or outwardly. In this sense, the inner meaning of sharing is far removed from any systematic method of exchanging commoditised goods or services; it means 'to be with' in all respects – compassionately, morally, ethically and lovingly.”* (Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi<sup>38</sup>)

## Part 2: The path towards the sharing economy

The sharing economy is something we know well, yet it also signifies something fundamentally new. Sharing lies at the heart of our economic relationships in families and small communities. We are also familiar with certain aspects of the sharing economy in broader social structures, such as local communities and the state.

We may not always recognise it by this name, but what is the tax system if not a mechanism for sharing a nation's wealth among its citizens? Each of us contributes a portion of our resources to a common pool, which provides us with essential services—education, healthcare, social support, infrastructure, and more. We give more at specific points in life; at others, we receive more. This ongoing exchange, guided by ability and need, is vital for building strong, cohesive communities. We may call it the welfare state, a welfare society, or simply the sharing economy.

However, we cannot speak of the genuine sharing economy at the international level nowadays. Instead, selfishness—what politicians often call 'national interest'—and greed prevail. The desire for goods fuels competition that could more accurately be described as a war for resources. Stronger, more developed nations often appropriate the wealth of poorer, weaker ones, resulting in profound economic inequality. In the past, powerful countries pursued these aims through conquest, colonisation, and exploitation. Today, the same goals are pursued through economic means, primarily by commodifying natural resources and essential goods.

Widespread hunger, poverty, preventable diseases and deaths, forced migration, social unrest, environmental problems, and even wars are direct consequences of this inequality, which is rooted in the struggle for resources. These are among the most significant challenges of our time.

The global sharing economy is therefore not merely desirable—it is essential. Only by sharing resources on a planetary scale can we meet the basic human needs of all people, which is the foundation of human well-being. However, this goal can only be achieved through cooperation and collaboration within the international community.

We must accept that the equitable sharing of resources across the human family is crucial to securing a future for ourselves and generations to come—a future defined by peace, justice, and prosperity. Despite our differences, which enrich our collective humanity, we must embrace the truth that we share one planet as our common home and belong to a single family: humankind. Everyone has the right to life, but that right depends on the ability to meet basic human needs.

## The three phases of implementing the sharing economy

Once humanity recognises the undeniable truth—that only through cooperation and the equitable sharing of the world’s resources can we meet our most urgent global challenges and secure a future of peace, prosperity, and environmental sustainability—the time will have come to establish a new, dominant economic paradigm: the sharing economy.

Establishing such an economy requires a gradual but coordinated approach, which can be divided into three interconnected phases. While these phases may occur simultaneously, the logical starting point should focus on where the need is greatest: saving human lives.

As early as 1963, U.S. President John F. Kennedy proclaimed: *“We have the ability, we have the means, and we have the capacity to eliminate hunger from the face of the earth in our lifetime. We only need the will.”*<sup>39</sup>

This monumental task cannot be left solely to charitable organisations. Despite their remarkable dedication, they do not have the ability to solve systemic issues such as extreme poverty and hunger on a global scale. These challenges can only be effectively addressed through coordinated action at the intergovernmental level. Likewise, climate change and other complex global crises also require unified international responses.

Today, the world has more than enough resources, goods, and technological and logistical capabilities to eradicate hunger and extreme poverty. The Marshall Plan, which exemplified U.S. support for rebuilding Europe after World War II, serves as a model. What is needed now is a global Marshall Plan—an unprecedented, internationally coordinated effort led by economically advanced nations to support the world’s poorest populations.

National armed forces could play a constructive role in this effort. Their logistical capabilities allow them to transport vast quantities of humanitarian supplies and ensure their safe distribution. Politicians often frame national defence in terms of military strength. But is not the eradication of hunger and poverty—which fuel conflict, forced migration, social unrest, and even climate destabilisation—the highest form of national and global security?

Once the international community has addressed humanity’s most urgent needs—a goal well within reach given today’s global resources and political will—the next phase of implementing the sharing economy can begin: the creation of a global mechanism for sharing resources.

This second phase envisions the establishment of an international agency, ideally within the framework of the United Nations, with equal representation from all nations. This agency would coordinate the global sharing of essential goods and services, particularly those needed to meet basic human needs. Countries would report surpluses and shortfalls in critical resources such as food, clean water, medicine, seeds, and essential equipment. This would enable the agency to maintain a global overview and facilitate the exchange of surplus goods where they are needed most urgently.

Such a mechanism would help stabilise the supply and demand of essential goods across regions, preventing price volatility and shortages in some areas while reducing waste and overproduction in others. Traditional markets for non-essential goods and services would continue to function, though potentially under improved regulation and accountability. To ensure preparedness for crises, the agency would also oversee the development of regional resource centres or warehouses stocked with emergency supplies, including food, clean water, medicines, tents, and other essentials. These centres would be regularly replenished to maintain adequate reserves. In the event of a major crisis, they could respond swiftly, pooling resources and delivering immediate aid—far more effectively than ad hoc relief efforts, which are often slow and fragmented.

The third and final phase involves the transformation of the global economic system itself. Addressing immediate needs is essential, but long-term well-being depends on building the conditions in which individuals and communities can thrive. As the old saying goes: *“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”*<sup>40</sup>

This transformation calls for creating a more just and sustainable economic order that prioritises human needs and ecological balance over profit and unrestrained growth. The truly inclusive sharing economy could incorporate progressive taxation, universal basic income, and the guaranteed provision of public services such as healthcare, education, and care for children, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups.

Many inspiring initiatives and community-led models are already proving the viability of a more cooperative, needs-based approach to economics. These local efforts hold great promise for broader application at national and international levels. While the first steps may seem difficult, they lay the foundation for a radical transformation of the world in which everyone’s basic well-being is protected.

History provides valuable insights. In 1980, the Brandt Commission, led by former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, published a groundbreaking report that highlighted the significant inequalities between the Global North and South. The Brandt Report called for a new international economic order based on justice, cooperation, and fair distribution of the world’s resources to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

In the book *Heralding Article 25: A People’s Strategy for World Transformation*, Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi describes the process of implementing the sharing economy on a global scale as follows:

*“Each nation would soon be compelled to make an inventory of the surplus resources they have at their disposal, including technology, knowledge, manpower and institutional capacity, as well as food, medicines, manufactured products, and any other basic materials or essential goods. A large-scale transfer of these resources to the poorest countries and regions would have to be organised through the United Nations and its global network of aid agencies, or through a new United Nations agency that is set up for the express purpose of overseeing a short-term emergency programme, which may have to continue apace for several years. ... Once the overriding objective of alleviating hunger and providing immediate*

*relief to all those who live in conditions of absolute poverty has been achieved, comprehensive reform of the international political, economic and financial systems will assume a momentous importance in order to establish a more balanced and equal distribution of world resources among all countries.”<sup>41</sup>*

In summary, the path to a fairer and more sustainable economic system—one that truly embodies the principles of the sharing economy—can be realised through three interconnected phases:

- **Phase 1 – Addressing urgent human needs:** Launch a global emergency relief programme, modelled on the Marshall Plan, to eradicate hunger, prevent avoidable deaths, and alleviate extreme deprivation.
- **Phase 2 – Coordinating global sharing:** Create an international agency to manage the fair distribution of essential goods and services, and establish regional centres for emergency preparedness and response.
- **Phase 3 – Systemic transformation:** Build a new economic paradigm based on justice, sustainability, and the universal fulfilment of basic human needs—an economy designed for people and the planet.

## Phase 1: Saving lives and alleviating human suffering caused by the lack of essential goods (the New Global Marshall plan)

Once we accept the principle of sharing, the first task must be to ensure that everyone has access to food, clean drinking water, adequate housing, and healthcare while also guaranteeing at least a basic education for all children. In this initial phase, the overriding priority is to save the lives of millions of people worldwide suffering due to a lack of essential resources.

This first phase of the sharing economy would resemble the work of today’s charitable organisations, which already provide life-saving assistance to millions. However, charities alone cannot eradicate poverty and hunger. Inconsistent and insufficient donations often constrain their efforts. What is required is reinforcement through coordinated support at the state level—including military forces, whose vast logistical, transport, and security capacities can significantly enhance the effectiveness of aid delivery.

The most well-known example of large-scale government-led aid is the Marshall Plan, through which the United States helped rebuild a devastated Europe after World War II. Between 1948 and 1952, the U.S. provided approximately \$13 billion in assistance (equivalent to around \$173 billion in 2023), primarily in food, equipment, and other vital supplies. This unprecedented effort played a central role in Europe’s rapid recovery, preventing further destabilisation and laying the groundwork for lasting peace.

Without such aid, Europe may have endured years of continued hardship and become entangled in new conflicts. Human well-being is the true foundation of peace. Even today, the Marshall Plan is a powerful model for how large-scale international assistance can lift entire populations out of severe deprivation and help them regain autonomy and prosperity.

The scale of global poverty today is immense. Despite the extraordinary efforts of the world's largest aid organizations, their work remains little more than a drop in the ocean. And yet, the Earth contains more than enough resources to meet everyone's basic needs. The true barriers are not material but political and economic. Migration, environmental degradation, and political instability are all symptoms of a deeper underlying cause: inequality.

We have formed a profoundly unequal global society. It is time to build a just world where every human has access to the resources and conditions necessary for a life of dignity.

Only through the combined efforts of national governments, the international community, charitable organisations, the public, and—ideally—large corporations with significant resources can we swiftly and sustainably eradicate hunger, poverty, and widespread deprivation. It is essential to recognise this task as our first and most urgent step. It lays the foundation for a world built on mutual trust and free from fear—conditions fundamental to lasting peace.

Once the worst human suffering has been alleviated, we can develop more sustainable mechanisms for sharing global resources and address the broader environmental, climatic, and systemic challenges that still lie ahead—but that are well within our collective power to resolve.

## Words from George Marshall: A call for compassion and the promotion of peace

Let us recall the words of U.S. Secretary of State General George Marshall, delivered during his landmark speech at Harvard University **on June 5, 1947**, which marked the launch of what would become known as the Marshall Plan:

*"I need not tell you, gentlemen, that the world situation is very serious. That must be apparent to all intelligent people. I think one difficulty is that the problem is one of such enormous complexity that the very mass of facts presented to the public by press and radio make it exceedingly difficult for the man in the street to reach a clear appraisal of the situation. Furthermore, the people of this country are distant from the troubled areas of the earth and it is hard for them to comprehend the plight and consequent reactions of the long-suffering peoples, and the effect of those reactions on their governments in connection with our efforts to promote peace in the world."*<sup>42</sup>

These words are as relevant today as they were then. They remind us to show compassion for those suffering in distant parts of the world—to understand their struggles, to help where we can, and, through that solidarity, to strive for peace.

In 1953, George Marshall received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his leadership and humanitarian vision—a distinction that holds significant meaning especially today.

## Current data on inadequate access to essential goods and services

To meet their basic needs, all people require food and clean drinking water, clothing, shelter with adequate sanitation, healthcare, social protection, and access to education. These are not privileges—they are fundamental necessities. Yet, a large portion of the world's population still lacks one or more of the essential resources needed to live with dignity.

The statistics on deprivation are staggering. Though this data is publicly available, it is often scattered across different sources and lost amid the daily flood of information. Behind each number lies immense suffering, preventable illness, and premature death. A compassionate person cannot remain unmoved—these are not just statistics, but human lives: our fellow brothers and sisters on this planet, our shared home.

### Hunger and nutritional insecurity

According to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024*<sup>43</sup>—a joint report by the FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO—between 713 and 757 million people globally faced hunger in 2023. That's roughly one in every eleven people on Earth.

Even more alarming is that 2.33 billion people—28.9% of the global population—experienced moderate or severe food insecurity.

In addition, around 2.8 billion people—more than one-third of humanity—cannot afford a healthy diet due to economic barriers that make nutritious food inaccessible.

### Food production vs. distribution

Current estimates indicate that the world produces enough food to feed 10 billion people,<sup>44</sup> yet the global population in 2024 is just over 8 billion. This significant difference reveals an important truth: the problem is not food production but distribution. Today, hunger is not caused by a lack of food; it stems from inequality and systemic inefficiencies.

### Access to basic healthcare

According to joint estimates from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Bank,<sup>45</sup> at least half of the world's population still lacks access to essential health services.

Furthermore, around 2 billion people face severe financial hardship due to out-of-pocket healthcare costs, often having to choose between treatment and basic survival.

### Access to safe drinking water and sanitation

Data from the United Nations<sup>46</sup> shows that 2.2 billion people—more than one in four—do not have access to safe drinking water.

An even larger number—3.5 billion people—lack safely managed sanitation services, increasing the risk of waterborne diseases and environmental degradation.

### Adequate housing

Globally, 1.6 billion people are estimated to live in inadequate housing—a number expected to rise to **3 billion by 2030** if current trends continue. In addition, around 100 million people are homeless, facing life without even the most basic shelter.<sup>47</sup>

### Access to education

Roughly 250 million children worldwide are out of school, meaning that 16% of children and adolescents from primary to secondary school lack access to education.<sup>48</sup>

One in ten children globally is not enrolled in school at the primary level alone. Of all children and youth out of school, 122 million—nearly half—are girls, who face additional barriers due to gender inequality.

## What do these numbers mean?

The figures we have cited should deeply shock us. As compassionate beings, we naturally care about the suffering of others. However, we live in a world governed by cause and effect—our indifference to the struggles of others can eventually affect us in various ways, such as through migration, conflict, disease, or even climate change. We may not fully realize how the immense suffering of millions impacts us and our children. It is time to awaken and start addressing the world's most urgent challenges, particularly hunger and poverty. Only then can we hope to live together in peace and shared prosperity.

## Phase 2: Establishing the international agency to coordinate global sharing and regional emergency centres

A coordinated international effort resembling the Marshall Plan could unite countries, charities, armed forces, businesses, and individuals to save hundreds of millions of people from suffering and needless death due to lack of essential goods such as food, water, medicine, adequate housing, and accessible healthcare. This initiative would also help lay the groundwork for more sustainable forms of international aid.

To prevent scarcity worldwide—whether caused by climate change (such as extreme droughts and floods), natural disasters, man-made crises, or unequal development—we must establish a sustainable system for sharing resources, particularly those resources that meet basic human needs.

The new Global Marshall Plan aims to be a one-time effort to eliminate hunger and extreme poverty around the globe. Additionally, the creation of an international mechanism for resource sharing would guarantee that no one is ever again deprived of life's essential goods and services.

Imagine a large global fund to which countries contribute their surplus resources and from which they can draw when facing shortages. In this system, priority would be given to essential goods that meet basic human needs—such as food, clean drinking water, medicine, clothing, sanitation supplies, and other vital necessities for survival.

Storing resources in a massive warehouse would be impractical, especially for food products that can spoil. Instead, we could establish an international agency to coordinate the global sharing of resources, allowing for direct exchanges between countries. Today, we have advanced information and communication technologies, extensive transportation and logistics capabilities—especially within the armed forces—and, importantly, artificial intelligence. All of these can facilitate the efficient global distribution of resources.

Countries would notify the UN specialised agency for coordinating global sharing (referred to as "the Agency") about the surplus resources they possess and the resources they require. The Agency would then coordinate the allocation of these surpluses on a global scale, making recommendations as to where surplus resources should be directed.

It is essential to clarify that this initiative pertains solely to surplus resources held by countries and does not involve the redistribution of personal wealth.

While countries would remain responsible for transporting these resources, they would do so by the Agency's recommendations, which would be informed by its broader perspective on global surpluses and shortages.

Although the Agency itself would not store emergency supplies, intervention centres could be established in various regions—such as Africa, Europe, South America, Australia, and potentially smaller areas. These centres would be equipped to respond to sudden natural or social disasters. They would maintain a constant stock of essential goods, including food, water, medicine, temporary shelter, and other necessities.

This approach would ensure that essential goods are readily available during disasters, reducing the need to gather aid each time an emergency occurs. A swift response can save many lives. In the event of major disasters, assistance can be coordinated across multiple intervention centers. The Agency would take responsibility for supplying and operating these centers, while also maintaining a continuous overview of global stock levels.

Establishing an agency to coordinate the global sharing of resources and create regional emergency intervention centres would permanently solve the shortages of essential goods that impact millions worldwide. This initiative would foster trust among nations and promote peaceful coexistence. Additionally, it would significantly reduce unwanted migration, as people would always have the goods and services they need to survive.

## The foundations for the global sharing of resources are already in place

After the Second World War, countries worldwide committed themselves to peace and prosperity. The lessons learned from the two world wars led to a sobering realisation and the establishment of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, aimed at ensuring international peace and prosperity. The UN Charter,<sup>49</sup> in Article 55, emphasises that stability and well-being “are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations”.

Three years later, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted. Article 25 states that *“everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.”*<sup>50</sup>

This recognised the right to a sufficient standard of living—including access to essential goods and services necessary to meet basic human needs—as a fundamental human right that allows everyone to achieve health and well-being.

The 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights<sup>51</sup> (ICESCR) builds upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and includes legally binding provisions for all signatory states. Article 11 of the ICESCR recognises the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living and protection from hunger. It also calls for international cooperation to ensure the equitable distribution of the world's food supplies.

*“1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.*

*2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:*

*(a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;*

*(b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.”*

It is the latter—*“an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need”*—that provides the appropriate foundation for the operation of the international agency responsible for coordinating global sharing among nations (Agency) and regional emergency centres. Naturally, these commitments must be extended to other essential commodities, ensuring the fair distribution of global reserves or surpluses according to need. But what about the organisational structure of the Agency?

Article 57 of the UN Charter states that specialised agencies may be established by intergovernmental agreement, *"having wide international responsibilities, as defined in their basic instruments, in economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related fields"*.

Article 59 of the United Nations Charter, however, emphasises that the UN *"shall, where appropriate, initiate negotiations among the states concerned for the creation of any new specialized agencies required for the accomplishment of the purposes set forth in Article 55."* This article affirms the UN's commitment to *"the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples."*

We have outlined the existing legal foundations for establishing a specialised United Nations agency to coordinate the global sharing of resources. The goal is to fulfil the fundamental human right of every person on Earth to an adequate standard of living — one that not only ensures survival but also promotes health and well-being.

Of course, this is merely a reflection on how we might organise the global sharing of resources among nations. Once we embrace the principles of sharing and cooperation as the foundation for new social and economic relations, we will undoubtedly discover the most effective way to distribute resources at the international level. Perhaps this reflection can serve as a suitable foundation for future steps.

The idea of establishing a specialised UN agency to coordinate global sharing, along with regional emergency intervention centres, is explored in greater detail in *A proposal for the global sharing of basic goods*.<sup>52</sup>

### Phase 3: Transforming the global economic system with an emphasis on sharing—an economy for people and the planet

"A new century nears, and with it the prospects of a new civilization. Could we not begin to lay the basis for that new community with reasonable relations among all people and nations, and to build a world in which sharing, justice, freedom and peace might prevail?" (Willy Brandt, 1983)<sup>53</sup>

After the first phase—known as the new Global Marshall Plan to tackle global poverty and hunger—the second phase would begin with the establishment of an international agency to coordinate the global sharing of resources. Following this, the time would come for a gradual transformation of the economic system. This new system, based on the principles of sharing and cooperation, could be described as the 'sharing economy'. Its primary goal would be to meet the basic needs of all individuals and ensure the well-being of humanity.

Before we move forward, let's take a moment to recognize some key organizations and agreements that showcase our ability to collaborate and work towards the common good. The shift towards the sharing economy requires wider political, social, and personal changes. We may have already started taking initial steps towards a shared future—one characterized by peace, prosperity, and a healthy environment.

## United Nations—Working together for peace and prosperity

The United Nations (UN) was established on 24 October 1945, following the end of the Second World War, to maintain international peace and security, fostering global cooperation, and prevent future conflicts. The UN succeeded the League of Nations, which was created after World War I but ultimately failed to prevent the outbreak of World War II.

The General Assembly is the most important organ of the United Nations, serving as the main forum for international debate, policy-making, and cooperation among Member States. Each of the 193 Member States has one vote, which ensures equal influence in decision-making; major decisions require a two-thirds majority to pass. The General Assembly holds annual regular sessions to discuss critical global issues, including peace and security, sustainable development, human rights, and international law. Its responsibilities include adopting resolutions, preparing the UN budget, and appointing the Secretary-General. Although the resolutions issued by the General Assembly are not legally binding, they carry significant political weight and reflect the global consensus on important issues.

Today, the Security Council, which is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, holds more influence than the General Assembly. It consists of 15 members: five permanent members (the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France), each of which has veto power, along with ten non-permanent members who are elected for two-year terms. The Security Council has the authority to adopt resolutions, impose sanctions, and deploy peacekeeping forces to areas in crisis. Its decisions are legally binding for all UN member states. The Council does not represent all members equally, and the veto power held by the five permanent members gives them disproportionate influence over crucial global security issues.

Reforming the United Nations should focus on reducing the dominance of the Security Council while strengthening the authority of the General Assembly—which is the UN's true representative body, where all member states have equal influence. Such reforms would transform the General Assembly into a genuine forum for making important global decisions that benefit all of humanity.

The United Nations consists of a variety of specialized agencies, programs, funds, and other organizations that tackle various global challenges. Some of the most well-known agencies include UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), WFP (World Food Programme), and IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency), among others. The establishment of a new agency to

oversee the sharing of goods between countries could be integrated within this existing framework.

The United Nations is an essential organization that fosters real cooperation among nations. It is not a world government; rather, it serves as a forum where every country has the chance to be heard. The most pressing challenges facing the world can only be addressed together—united in diversity.

## European Union—United in diversity

The motto of the European Union is "United in Diversity." This phrase "signifies how Europeans have come together, in the form of the EU, to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the continent's many different cultures, traditions and languages."<sup>54</sup> The EU consists of 27 Member States, which are home to approximately 447 million inhabitants, who speak 24 official languages. In addition to the euro used by 20 countries, seven other currencies are also in circulation. The EU is characterised by a rich variety of cultures, religions, customs, and traditions.

The European continent has experienced numerous major and minor wars and conflicts for centuries. As a result, the coexistence of European countries within the European Union represents a significant advancement. Although living together poses challenges, we must recognize that the alternative is separation, which often fosters hatred and conflict.

What does the motto 'United in Diversity' mean? It signifies that we are united as one community while preserving our differences—linguistic, cultural, religious, political, or otherwise. We coexist peacefully, collaborate, support one another, share resources, care for our shared environment, and honor each other's unique backgrounds. This ideal should apply not only to the European Union but also to the global community as a whole.

The European Union is proof that we can live together despite our differences. Eighty years ago, during the raging of the Second World War, such a reality seemed unimaginable. Today, former great enemies live in peace, visit one another, exchange experiences, learn foreign languages, and more. We must protect, nurture, preserve, and further develop this precious unity in diversity. As we have already stated, it is not always easy, but it is far better than living in fear, hatred, and conflict.

Our European experience can become global. Let us finally live as a global community—a large family, one humanity—in peace and prosperity, united in diversity.

## The Brandt Report: Cooperation for world recovery

In 1977, Willy Brandt established the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, the Brandt Commission. The commission included prominent members from various world regions, representing diverse political and economic systems. In 1980, it published the report titled *North-South: A Programme for Survival*. Three years later, it released a second report called *Common Crisis: North-South Cooperation for World Recovery*. Together, these two reports are referred to as the Brandt Report.<sup>55</sup>

Willy Brandt (1913–1992) was Chancellor of Germany from 1969 to 1974. Before that, he served as Foreign Minister and Mayor of West Berlin. In 1971, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to promote peaceful relations with the Eastern Bloc.

The Brandt Report addressed significant global issues such as poverty, hunger, and developmental inequalities. It proposed various solutions to help alleviate these problems. Here are some key highlights of the report, which continues to be relevant more than four decades later, as it tackles fundamental global problems:

- Increase in development aid to foster developing nations' economic and social progress.
- Establishment of fairer trade conditions, providing developing countries with better access to global markets and ensuring more equitable prices for their products.
- Easing developing countries' debt burdens through more favourable repayment terms and, in some cases, debt relief.
- Increased foreign direct investment in developing countries to foster economic growth and sustainable development.
- Enhanced technology transfer from developed to developing countries to strengthen their production capacity and competitiveness.
- Adoption of sustainable energy policies, including promoting renewable energy sources and strengthening international cooperation on energy security.
- Reinforcement of international institutions and mechanisms to improve global governance and effectively address global challenges through coordinated efforts.
- Implementation of targeted programmes to combat hunger and poverty, with a focus on enhancing agricultural productivity and improving food distribution systems.

Another key aspect of the report is the issue of armaments and global security. In this regard, the report proposes:

- Reducing military expenditure, particularly in developed countries, and reallocating these funds for development purposes. Lower military budgets would free up substantial resources to combat poverty and improve living conditions in developing countries.

- Strengthening international arms control mechanisms and increasing transparency regarding military stockpiles and expenditures to prevent arms races and reduce the risk of armed conflict.
- Prioritising diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts and advance peace initiatives, while reinforcing the role of the United Nations and other international organisations in conflict resolution and establishing lasting peace.
- Gradual disarmament, particularly of nuclear weapons, and the promotion of international negotiations and agreements aimed at reducing nuclear arsenals.

The Brandt Report was significant for its comprehensive approach to global challenges and its emphasis on the interdependence between rich and developing countries. It highlighted the need for a fairer and more sustainable global economic system, sparking ongoing debate and action on international development. Even today, the Brandt Report remains a powerful foundation for the changes needed, particularly in the economic sphere, if we are truly committed to building a peaceful, secure, and healthy world.

## Common goals for a common future

As a global community, we have already demonstrated our ability to collaborate, set concrete shared goals, and establish agreements to achieve them. The Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals are clear examples of this.

Since the end of the Cold War in 1991, numerous conferences and summits have been held to address the world's most pressing challenges collectively. These efforts culminated in the year 2000, at the dawn of the new millennium, when the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the Millennium Summit.

All 191 United Nations Member States, along with at least 22 international organizations, committed to achieving eight development goals by 2015: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and fostering a global partnership for development.<sup>56</sup>

Although the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were not fully achieved, many countries made varying degrees of progress in specific areas. As early as 2012, the United Nations began shaping a new global development framework to replace or build upon the MDGs beyond 2015.

This led to adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, endorsed by all UN Member States. The preamble of the Agenda, officially titled *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, outlines the essence of this plan:

*“This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. We recognise that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. All countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan. We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want and to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. As we embark on this collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets which we are announcing today demonstrate the scale and ambition of this new universal Agenda. They seek to build on the Millennium Development Goals and complete what these did not achieve. They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.*

*The Goals and targets will stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.”<sup>57</sup>*

The Sustainable Development Goals consist of 17 overarching goals and 169 specific targets, emphasising the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainable development.

Let’s highlight some of the goals directly linked to meeting basic human needs:

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

The word 'agenda' originates from the Latin *agendum*, meaning “*something to be done*.”<sup>58</sup> An agenda is commonly understood as a plan or program of action adopted by organisations or governments to achieve specific goals. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a strong foundation for collective action, as sustainable development—both now and in the future—cannot be achieved without eradicating hunger and poverty and ensuring that basic human needs are met. We must make it happen!

Environmental, social, and economic issues are inseparably interconnected. The sharing economy can play a crucial role in addressing these challenges.

## Let's change the world

It's time to change the world. The Marshall Plan proves that many people can be swiftly lifted from hunger and poverty. The Brandt Report offers a solid foundation for addressing common global challenges—challenges that can only be tackled through cooperation among all the world's nations. We have set clear objectives for what must be done: first with the Millennium Development Goals and later with the Sustainable Development Goals, which remain just as relevant today.

The United Nations is a global organisation that brings together and unites all countries in the world. While certain reforms are necessary, especially to enhance the influence of the General Assembly, the United Nations continues to serve as an essential framework for collective action aimed at achieving prosperity, peace, and sustainable development.

There are many proposals aimed at sharing society's wealth more equitably and ensuring that everyone can meet their basic needs. Approaches such as universal basic income, accessible public services for all, and fairer progressive taxation are primarily implemented at the national level. The welfare state is an example of how to guarantee that no citizen suffers from a lack of essential goods and services. Unfortunately, only a limited number of countries have successfully adopted this model.

We have also explored the idea of sharing resources globally, coordinated by a new agency within the United Nations. This would ensure that every person on Earth can consistently meet their basic human needs, enabling society as a whole to thrive.

If we truly want to change the world, we already have a strong foundation—both in terms of organisation and through practical experience, established goals, and new ideas. All that remains is to take action.

Change is only possible when each of us is willing to embrace it. We must see humanity as one family living together on our shared home, Earth. We all inhabit this planet and share its abundant resources, meaning everyone deserves a fair share. We can live together, side by side, in peace and prosperity while preserving our diversity.  
Let's change the world!

# Closing meditation

The economy should evolve into a social domain that prioritises fulfilling the basic needs of every individual, ensuring the well-being of all humanity, and protecting the environment. By nature, humans are economic beings and an inseparable part of the socio-economic community we shape through actions. Economic decisions are not solely the responsibility of political and economic leaders but also the responsibility of each of us.

We must ensure everyone can access food and clean water, adequate housing, clothing, health and social care, and education. These basic needs are fundamental human rights. The resources that fulfil these needs and ensure the well-being of humanity must be managed with care and sustainability, as they are the commons of humanity.

An economic system driven by competition, selfishness, and greed is no longer sustainable. It perpetuates social stratification and deepens economic inequality. Global economic inequality—reflected in the extreme wealth of a few and the poverty of the many—gives rise to widespread hunger, shortages of essential goods, forced migration, conflict, and the climate crisis.

Sharing and cooperation are the foundational principles of a new economic system and mindset known as the sharing economy. It is grounded in the belief that every individual has the right to health and well-being—rights that cannot be fulfilled through charity, but only through justice.

The sharing economy encompasses a range of activities designed to meet the basic needs of all people and promote the well-being of humanity, including environmental protection. If its objectives diverge from these, it can no longer be considered the true sharing economy.

It is particularly important to establish the sharing of resources among countries at the international level. A new United Nations agency could coordinate the global distribution of essential goods, ensuring that no one in the world is deprived of these basic necessities. This is also a vital prerequisite for peace and the genuine progress of humanity.

We humans are one big family—one humanity—sharing a common home: planet Earth. That is why the sharing economy represents not just an economic model, but a way of living together and managing our relationships. Only by sharing resources for the benefit of all can we establish right human relations, grounded in compassion and love. Through sharing, we will transform both the world and ourselves.

# Food for the thought

This chapter offers a selection of recommended online sources where readers interested in the sharing economy will find plenty of thought-provoking material.

## Share the World's Resources

Share the World's Resources (STWR) is a non-governmental organisation founded in 2003 and based in London, United Kingdom. It is dedicated to promoting the fair distribution of resources globally. The organisation aims to raise public awareness about the urgent need to share the world's resources to solve interconnected crises that governments often struggle to address effectively.

In addition to public education, STWR participates in various activities to foster a unified voice among the people. The goal is to peacefully demand that governments uphold Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Website: <https://sharing.org/>

Here are some citations from **Mohammed Sofiane Mesbahi**, founder of Share the World's Resources:

*“So for the majority of humanity to be with nature and act harmlessly towards the outer environment, to contribute to what man has created and all that he will create—in the sphere of the arts, technology, science and all else—it means we will have to finally accept the necessity of sharing the bounteous produce of this earth.”<sup>59</sup>*

*“There is no ‘ism’ in such economic and political arrangements if the principle of sharing is applied as the operative basis of every society, thereby freeing pressure and competition between one nation and another. The effect of implementing a process of sharing within and between nations will be to put the ideologies of capitalism and socialism in their right place, so that they can finally work in unison together. It will also enable us to look at the world’s problems without the energy of being ‘against’, but only ‘for’.”<sup>60</sup>*

*“When all the nations come together and share the resources of the world, when humanity brings about balance in consciousness and in nature—that is the meaning of power in its truly spiritual and life-giving sense. All the so-called powerful people in our present-day society are sustained only by commerce, by laws, by ideologies and beliefs. But when we no longer bow to their authority and peacefully unite as one, then we will see what power really is.”<sup>61</sup>*

*“It may be misconstrued that saving the poor and starving masses is the only reason for promoting our vision of a sharing economy, which is actually far from the case. What we are most concerned with is the need to bring awareness, love and common sense to our everyday*

*thinking and actions. It only happens that our prevalent lack of thinking about the welfare of others is what most overtly demonstrates the absence of these long-suppressed human attributes. We need to ask ourselves why we are interested in saving those who are needlessly dying from poverty-related causes, if we don't consider them equal to ourselves with a divine right to spiritually evolve."*<sup>62</sup>

## Share International

We present another organisation whose very name reflects the central idea of sharing - *Share International*. However, Share International represents another important story:

Maitreya, as the teacher of humanity, is beginning his work to transform our mindset and actions, which will be based on justice, cooperation, the sharing of resources, and right human relations.

Website: <https://share-international.org/>

Here are some citations from Share International:

*"The key to solving our global issues, Maitreya says, is sharing. This principle of sharing is essential, as on it rests justice, and without justice there will be no peace. It will be found that once this important first step is taken all other problems humanity faces will be more easily solved. Once massive aid has been given to the poorest areas of the planet, the redistribution of the world's resources according to need — including food, raw materials, energy and technology — is recommended, until a more equitable balance is achieved."*<sup>63</sup>

*"At this time of great political, economic and social crisis, Maitreya will inspire humanity to see itself as one family and create a civilization based on sharing, economic and social justice, and global cooperation."*<sup>64</sup>

*"How can you be content with the modes within which you now live: when millions starve and die in squalor; when the rich parade their wealth before the poor; when each man is his neighbour's enemy; when no man trusts his brother?  
For how long must you live thus, My friends?  
For how long can you support this degradation?"*

*“My plan and My duty is to reveal to you a new way, a way forward which will permit the divine in man to shine forth.*

*Thus do I speak gravely, My friends and brothers.*

*Hearken well to My words.*

*Man must change or die: there is no other course. When you see this you will gladly take up My Cause, and show that for man exists a future bathed in Light.*

*My Teaching is simple:*

*Justice, Sharing and Love are divine aspects.*

*To manifest his divinity, man must embrace these three.” (Maitreya<sup>65</sup>)*

# Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 25*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

<sup>2</sup> Mesbahi, M. S. (2016). *Heralding Article 25: A people's strategy for world transformation*. Share The World's Resources. Retrieved from <https://sharing.org/information-centre/reports/heralding-article-25-peoples-strategy-world-transformation>

<sup>3</sup> Share International. *Maitreya's priorities*. Share International. Retrieved from <https://share-international.org/in-depth/maitreya/priorities/>

<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia. *Meditation*. Wikipedia. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meditation>

<sup>5</sup> In this sense, the word *meditation* can also be understood in a more spiritual context—as a way of aligning with one's inner self or soul and its qualities, such as compassion and love. These are precisely the qualities we need in our economic relations with one another—and on a global scale.

<sup>6</sup> Mesbahi, M. S. (2021). *The sharing economy: Inaugurating an age of the heart*. Share The World's Resources. Retrieved from <https://sharing.org/information-centre/reports/sharing-economy-inaugurating-age-heart>

<sup>7</sup> Wikipedia. *Sharing*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharing>

<sup>8</sup> Vocabulary.com. *Sharing*. *Vocabulary.com Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/sharing>

<sup>9</sup> Wikipedia. *Principle*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principle>

<sup>10</sup> Wikipedia. *Goods*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goods>

<sup>11</sup> Mesbahi, M. S. (2017). *The commons of humanity*. Share The World's Resources. Retrieved from <https://sharing.org/information-centre/reports/commons-humanity>

<sup>12</sup> In this discussion, we use the term 'economy' to refer to the actual system of production, distribution, and consumption, distinguishing it from 'economics', which is the academic discipline. The sharing economy is not a new branch of economic science; rather, it aims to transform the economy and, by extension, society.

<sup>13</sup> Darwin, C. (2000). *The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex*. Project Gutenberg. Retrieved from <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/2300>

<sup>14</sup> Wikipedia. *Oikonomos*. Wikipedia. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oikonomos>

<sup>15</sup> Economy and ecology are not closely related by coincidence. While *economy* is derived from the Greek words *oikos* (household) and *nomos* (management or law)—meaning the management of resources and the environment for the well-being of the household—*ecology* comes from *oikos* and *logos* (study or discourse), referring to the study of relationships between living beings and their environment, and, in more recent times, also the care for the environment.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 25*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Wikipedia. *Gross National Happiness*. Wikipedia. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross\\_National\\_Happiness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gross_National_Happiness)

<sup>19</sup> GNH Centre Bhutan. *History of GNH*. Retrieved from <https://www.gnhcentrebhutan.org/history-of-gnh/>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> PHmuseum. *OIKOS*. Retrieved from <https://phmuseum.com/projects/oikos>; Wikipedia. *Oikonomos*. Wikipedia. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oikonomos>

<sup>22</sup> Wikipedia. *Ecology*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecology>

<sup>23</sup> The understanding of the concept *oikos* can be further expanded, as illustrated by the following passage: “The Greek word for household is *oikos*, which means the words ecology (*oikos-logos*, the studied knowledge of our planetary household), economy (*oikos-nomos*, the management of the household), and ecumenicity (*oikou-menikos*, an openness to the worldwide household) all share a basic orientation to home.” (Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development. *The Oikos of God: Economy and Ecology in the Global Household*. Retrieved from <https://interfaithsustain.com/the-oikos-of-god-economy-and-ecology-in-the-global-household/>)

<sup>24</sup> “In philosophy, economics, and political science, the common good (also commonwealth, common weal, general welfare, or public benefit) is either what is shared and beneficial for all or most members of a given community, or alternatively, what is achieved by citizenship, collective action, and active participation in the realm of politics and public service.” (Wikipedia. *Common good*. Wikipedia. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common\\_good](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_good))

<sup>25</sup> Mesbahi, M. S. *Commercialisation: The antithesis of sharing*. Share The World's Resources. Retrieved from <https://sharing.org/information-centre/articles/commercialisation-antithesis-sharing>

<sup>26</sup> Wiktionary. *Commercium*. Retrieved from <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/commercium>

<sup>27</sup> Rousseau, J. J. (1755). *Discourse on the origin of inequality*. Retrieved from [https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125494/5019\\_Rousseau\\_Discourse\\_on\\_the\\_Origin\\_of\\_Inequality.pdf](https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125494/5019_Rousseau_Discourse_on_the_Origin_of_Inequality.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Wikipedia. (2025, April 17). *Polycrisis*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polycrisis>

<sup>29</sup> Wikipedia. *Principle*. Retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Principle>

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<sup>31</sup> Menshikov, S. (1993). Towards an economy of compassion. *Buddhist Himalaya*, 5(1–2). Retrieved from <https://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-BH/bh117522.htm>

<sup>32</sup> Wollstonecraft, M. (1792). *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. V Oxford Reference. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191843730.001.0001/q-oro-ed5-00011696>

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- <sup>34</sup> New International Version Bible. *Bible.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.bible.com/bible/compare/LUK.16.20-21>
- <sup>35</sup> Mesbahi, M. S. *Heralding Article 25: A people's strategy for world transformation*. Share The World's Resources. Retrieved from <https://sharing.org/information-centre/reports/heralding-article-25-peoples-strategy-world-transformation>
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>37</sup> United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
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