

Welcoming Remarks by Roberto Peccei to the PARADISO 2 Conference

Brussels, September 7-9, 2011

Good afternoon, I am Roberto Peccei, the President of the Fondazione Aurelio Peccei, which serves as the Italian Chapter of the Club of Rome. I am very happy to say a few words of welcome on behalf of the Fondazione Peccei to the participants of the PARADISO Conference “Internet and Societies: New Innovation Paths”. This Conference comes at a very propitious moment, as it coincides with the completion of the PARADISO Reference Document: *A forward-looking analysis to identify new innovation paths for the Future Internet*”. The Conference also comes in the Fall of a year where the societal impact that social networks can have really became apparent, both in connection with the Arab spring movement and with the recent civil disturbances in London and in the United States.

As the PARADISO project has stressed, one cannot really think of what the Internet of the future will be, without thinking at the same time of what the future of our society will be. It was emphasized long ago by Gaston Berger and Bertrand de Jouvenel, two great French future thinkers, that one of the principal tasks of mankind is to be prepared for the future. Dennis Gabor, who received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1971 for his invention of holography and was one of the early members of the Club of Rome, used to say that not only it is important for mankind to be prepared for the future, but it must also strive to “invent its own future”. In the next three days we will see and hear abundant examples of inventing the future and of the role that the internet can, and should have, in these imagined futures.

In my view, it is important that these imagined futures receive careful scrutiny and that through this process we begin to slowly construct a new operating system, not only for the internet, but also for our society. As I mentioned last year at the PARADISO Conference, we can no longer equate growth with prosperity and neglect the impact that man has on our environment. The world badly needs a new economics, an operating system which is built around the idea of preserving the commons not exploiting the commons. Only then we will insure that man and the biosphere that sustains our lives are in harmony and our common future is secure.

Let me conclude by saying how very grateful I am to Roger Torrenti, the CEO of Sigma Orionis and the Coordinator of the Paradiso Project, and to Roland Burger of the Fondazione Aurelio Peccei, for having put together such an excellent program. It is also a real pleasure to thank the European Commission for hosting this conference and for providing support for the PARADISO project.