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WWF :
**A MIXTURE OF MILITANT AND INSTITUTIONAL
ACTION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

by

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Overview

Like many environmental NGOs (non-governmental organisations), the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), easily recognisable by its panda logo, concentrated its activities on the fight against global warming. The effects of global warming are likely to be so catastrophic that it ought to be a priority for everyone at the present time. From the outset, the WWF has had a policy of partnerships with companies which participate in many of its programmes. However, its partnership with Lafarge, an industrial group whose activities generate a great deal of pollution, hails a new dimension, and has caused internal disagreements within the international WWF network. This partnership only seems acceptable provided that it goes well beyond a mere 'green washing' and that it preserves total freedom of expression. This may prove to be very worthwhile : when industrialists rally to the side of ecologists, as at Beddington in England, or on the banks of the Elbe in Germany, the results are spectacular.

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TALK : Daniel RICHARD

As an introduction, I would like to describe briefly the WWF, explain how it works, talk about the type of relationships we are starting to build with companies, and mention my personal career path which led me to work for this NGO.

Presentation of the WWF

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is an NGO which is European and not American, as one sometimes thinks. It employs four thousand people, has several hundreds of thousands of volunteers, includes five million members, and exists in about one hundred countries. It is the most important global organisation for the protection of nature.

All the associations within the WWF carry out scientific research based on six main themes ; climatic change, the forest, fresh water, marine, species of life, and toxic substances. In addition, we have identified two hundred and thirty priority "ecoregions " which represent 85 % of the global biodiversity sites. In France, for example, the relevant ecoregions are the Camargue and the entire region of the Alps. As a result of research and intervention in these two regions, we have acquired an expertise which allows us to be regarded as credible.

Originally, the WWF concentrated on the protection of animals, as its panda logo suggests. However, for some time now, we have been diverting our activities to the fight against global warming, a topic which has also become a priority for most environmental associations.

An original way of working

The NGOs are special in that they cannot be defined by what they are but by the fact that they are different from each other. They are non-governmental organisations, but it is very difficult to explain exactly what they are. One of the aspects which greatly intrigues people with whom we come into contact, is knowing where the power - and especially the financial power - lies in an international organisation of this size. Another puzzle is knowing how such a network can function so efficiently. Sometimes we are able to get actions up and running on an international level in the space of twenty-four hours, which is practically inconceivable, even for a very organised industrial group.

In practical terms, the WWF structure is composed as follows. Each association or national foundation is independent. The international branch is structured to co-ordinate them, but has no financial or legal responsibility whatsoever for these associations outside of the contractual ties concerning the use of the logo. In each country, there is someone in charge of each of our six themes or 'missions'. These people in turn are supervised by their respective 'global theme manager'. When there is a worldwide press campaign, it is the same advertising company which groups together all the communication elements for all the WWF associations. National budgets are reported yearly and controlled by the International Federation in order to check that the accounts comply with our working rules. All of these accounts are completely open and published on the Internet.

One of the factors which explains the efficiency of an NGO like ours, is that the people who work with us, whether as employees or volunteers, generally are looking for other meanings in their lives, which is the reason why they are very strongly motivated and involved.

The policy of the shepherd

When we suggest a partnership with a company, the company generally starts by treating us like consultants, because it is the kind of relationship with which they are familiar and have mastered. In actual fact, we do not consider ourselves to be consultants, but shepherds. Our mission is to make the company become aware of its responsibility to the environment which

was previously unsatisfactory. Often, companies try to acquire a clean conscience by 'painting themselves green', whereas our aim is to push them much further!

In the first instance, we accept the consultant role, and the company may believe that it has made a good impression. We do not argue because we know that by virtue of the contract which we sign, our strength is not at the beginning but at the end. Every year, we can threaten to end the partnership if we observe that the company has not really tried to make any progress. This would obviously present a great risk to the company's image.

Practice makes perfect

Personally, I was not born an ecologist even though I come from a region – the Camargue – where the environmental quality is exceptional and furthermore is threatened. I became an ecologist about twenty years ago in quite a paradoxical way, namely during my presidency of the company 3 Suisses. When I was thumbing through our catalogue, which is sent to one in three households in France, I recognised the responsibility that we – the company – had, with respect to both the products which we sold, and the views and position that we adopted in this catalogue.

So I decided to get rid of a certain number of products from the catalogue which we were selling on a massive scale and which seemed to me to be irresponsible, such as products containing lead or even certain types of batteries. We withdrew two thousand five hundred products from the catalogue, without considering the economic or financial cost of this operation.

Secondly, we thought that our telesales operators, of whom there are about a thousand, should be capable of describing our products to clients and especially drawing their attention to each product's environmental qualities. We suggested that if they wished, they could do a training course for two hours each week, during their working hours, when specialists would tell them about the problems of water or air pollution. They were very pleased at being given this opportunity as it allowed them to stand out among their families and friends. Also, they were now able to pass this information on to clients when necessary.

At the same time, we built the second aeolian windmill in France. By installing wood-fired boilers, we were able to produce both electricity and heat from the same energy source. These operations made our employees very proud and strengthened the cohesion within our company. It was during this time that I came into contact with the WWF, and I started acquiring the culture of an ecologist. I became aware of the responsibility that heads of companies had regarding the protection of the environment on a planetary scale.

Therefore, it was through my activity within a company that I became an ecologist. Of course, once one has committed oneself, one's involvement becomes increasingly militant, because one comes up against strong resistance not only from many companies but also from institutions, which particularly in France are generally anti-ecologist to an extent which is hard to believe. I have been known to lie down in front of a police car in order to prevent it from passing or to chain myself to a tree to prevent it from being cut down, but this was not how I first started out.

TALK : Thanh NGHIEM

Let me start by talking a little about my career. Having studied at the *École des mines* and then at the *INSEAD* Business School, I worked for McKinsey for thirteen years as a partner, and then for the Suez Group in the water management division. I left the group in 2002 because I did not agree with what the shareholders forced us to do when the share price fell.

Over the past two years, during which my role has been to distribute water to shanty towns, I have noticed that the social and environmental schism was often felt by the same people. I decided to work for the WWF not out of a simple concern for ecology or for the environment, but in order to help the process of sustainable development and the transformation of styles of consumption and ways of life.

The idea of an ecological footprint

The ecological footprint is our fundamental working tool. This indicator was perfected in 1993 in the United States by researchers who wanted to measure the impact of man on the planet, and particularly the importance of his predatory nature on natural resources, a factor which the GDP does not take into account. To this end, they set up a system which provides an assessment of the impact of our activities on the use of resources and the production of waste.

A clear and educational idea

For example, one can calculate the area required for the cultivation of cereals, for grazing land from which animals provide meat, for forests from which wood is derived, for fishing areas which provide fish, for building land, etc. However, one can also convert the amount of energy consumed in terms of the amount of carbon dioxide released, and by the hectares of forest used.

This type of calculation shows that we derive much more from the planet than it regenerates. It is estimated that there are twelve billion hectares of usable land and yet the ecological footprint of all humanity exceeded this in the 1970s and has continued to grow ever since.

This consumption is not the same for all continents. If one divides twelve billion hectares by six billion human beings, the result is two hectares per person. Yet, the average ecological footprint for a person living in the United States is estimated to be ten hectares. In other words, if everyone lived like the Americans, it would be necessary to have five planets to satisfy our needs. As far as the English and the French are concerned, their ecological footprint is estimated to be six hectares, and if everyone lived like them, we would need three planets. Countries like India and China have a very different way of life, but China in particular is in the process of catching up the more affluent countries. In the knowledge that the global population will reach nine billion human beings in 2050, it is clear that the pressure put on natural resources will become untenable.

The concept of the ecological footprint has been widely disseminated. Even if one disagrees with the way in which it is calculated, it has the attraction of being clear and educational. On the one hand, it highlights the global pressure on the planet, and on the other, the scandalous discrepancies between rich and poor countries.

Food and transport

The first reaction of the man in the street when he discovers the concept of ecological footprint is to feel powerless. « *What can I do ?* » The fact is that when one analyses the English way of life, for example, one discovers that 40 % of the consumption of natural resources is linked to food. This is because consumed food is generally treated by industrial processes, packaged, and then transported. Each such operation necessitates a large

consumption of energy, including the combustion of the packaging at the end of the chain. One estimates that the average meal of an English person represents three thousand kilometres of transport as a whole, since 80 % of what he consumes is imported.

One often cites the example of the prawn. Prawn fishing, as practised by Danish fishermen, is very unproductive, since only 2 % of the catch is prawns. The rest is either thrown back into the sea or transformed into food powder for fish which are farmed. These prawns are then transported by aeroplane to North Africa to be shelled and then returned to Denmark to be packaged and finally distributed by lorry throughout Europe. There are other cases like this. This example shows the structure of all of our economic exchanges which are based on the mining of natural resources and the cheap workforce in developing countries, and on transport whose costs do not reflect the pollution and nuisances generated.

Let us take the example of strawberries bought out-of-season for four Euros per kilo on the market. If we break down the real cost of carbon dioxide released in transporting them by aeroplane, and the area of forest necessary to reconstitute that amount of energy, one derives a cost ten times greater, in other words forty Euros per kilo, which ought to make the cost prohibitive.

The transport factor is also important for non-edible goods. Therefore, a pair of jeans ‘travels’ on average sixty-five thousand kilometres if one calculates the transport of the cotton, the rivets etc., and of the finished product which arrives in the shop. Of course, one could claim that if we were to stop importing products, the economies of poor countries would collapse. However, it is worth knowing that for a pair of jeans sold for sixty Euros, only thirty centimes goes to the cotton producer in the developing country and the rest is taken by the middlemen, especially those who market the product.

Let me tell you a short story : we took part in the World Summit for sustainable development in Johannesburg in 2002, and because we went there by aeroplane, this represented a very sizeable footprint. Even before starting any discussions, we had contributed seriously to global pollution ! So we adopted a system of “self-flagellation” which consisted of each participant financing the reconstitution of the equivalent of the relevant ecological footprint in forest conservation programmes.

A model example of a sustainable way of life

In order to put an end to this unbridled overconsumption of natural resources, one does not have to go back to the Stone Age and refuse to use heating or to take showers. One can maintain a very normal way of life while at the same time greatly reducing one’s ecological footprint. This is what the pilot site (BedZED : Beddington Zero Energy Development) which we designed at Beddington demonstrates. Beddington is a small town, twenty minutes from London.

The aim was to build a town which functioned without any carbon emissions. To achieve this, the village was built using innovative methods which enabled the energy consumption to decrease by 90 % and the total ecological footprint by 50 % but also, incidentally, to reduce the operating budget by 15 %.

The programme began in 1995 and the construction work took place between 1998 and 2000. Eighty-two houses were built using materials from neighbouring industrial sites which had been demolished bit by bit to allow the materials to be salvaged. A programme was launched with less qualified workers (including unemployed people and prisoners) to renovate land which had been covered in concrete, and to create allotments intended for market gardening. The interiors of the houses were equipped with either natural or salvaged materials which came from places within a fifty-kilometre radius of the site. Wastewater is treated on the site by a system of macrobiotic plants called “Living Machine”. The roofs of the houses are covered with photovoltaic panels which were designed in a very innovative way with help

from British Petroleum : the surplus energy accumulated throughout the day is stored in the form of batteries or hot water by a method of joint energy generation.

A little car, the size of a Smart, was created to help people move around. It is called the Zed-Mobile and is electrically charged, using electricity generated from solar energy. This means that the cost of the solar panels can be recouped much faster by saving money both on heating and on petrol. A car-share programme was also launched : whereas on average each English household has two cars, at BedZED the average is one car for two households. To achieve this, transport in the village was deliberately allocated (for example for food, fresh produce and grocery deliveries etc.). As well as wishing to limit transport, working from home is strongly encouraged : the houses were supplied with cables to give access to multimedia.

This experience will now become widespread in Great Britain, because the British government has decided to create one million houses like this in the next ten years. The budget of thirty-three billion Euros will be partly covered by local authority council housing departments. It is important to note that the BedZED houses were sold at market price but scarcely three years later they are already selling for 40 % more. This is an excellent profit model. Furthermore, this concept is in the process of being exported to China, Portugal and also France.

Change in depth of our economic structures

The lesson which we can draw from this experience is that in order to be efficient, the approach taken has to be global. It is not enough to fix two solar panels on the roof of one's house. One has to think in terms of regional planning and the local economic fabric. The result may also be beneficial on an economic level. From the example of BedZED one can see that the desire to encourage the local loop to protect the environment was a strong catalyst for the creation of local jobs including jobs for a non-qualified workforce.

Because it is difficult to generalise from this type of experience immediately, we designed a three-tiered tool for local and other authorities. The first stage suggests that the town councils make simple and low cost choices in favour of the environment such as solar panels, public lighting, insulation of buildings, and so on.

The second stage is the type of programme developed at Beddington. The third stage concerns the bioregional dimension : we are in the process of developing a pilot scheme in the Camargue to show the authorities what can be done in terms of different types of major developments, such as transportation or even the treatment of industrial waste.

The idea is that we gradually arrive at the right result in order to change the way of life radically. Although every change in personal behaviour is positive, one should not be taken in too easily. It is only by changing heavy structures which shape our ways of life that we will significantly reduce our ecological footprint.

Two examples of partnerships with companies

In this in-depth change of heavy structures which shape our ways of life, it is obvious that companies have a role to play. That is why we started to develop partnerships with companies, not a very easy task since it creates a lack of enthusiasm within the company.

The partnership with Lafarge

The partnership with Lafarge was signed in 2000. Lafarge is undoubtedly one of the groups which ecologists view most negatively. Carbon dioxide emissions from its factories represent twice those of Switzerland ! For us, the stakes were high : if we managed to make them reduce this footprint, the impact would be considerable. For Lafarge, the stakes were also crucial as, at present, whenever this group wants to open a quarry, it results in an outcry.

How does one go about working on sustainable development with a cement manufacturer ? Many NGOs similar to ours considered that this operation was merely a case of so-called 'green washing', and it is true that we undoubtedly made the mistake of announcing this operation before we presented solid proposals. However, six months after signing, we had drawn up a very ambitious plan of action containing a clause which we thought was very important. It stated that whatever happened, the WWF would keep its freedom of expression. In the 2002 annual report, for example, we did not by any means agree about the presentation which was made regarding a key project in Scotland, and this was explicitly mentioned in the report.

First of all, we carried out fundamental work on the renovation of quarries in terms of their exploitation. In order to do this, we devised indicators of biodiversity which enabled us to measure the renewal of the flora and fauna after the renovation operations by listing the number of species, their rarity, and so on, and by taking account of the climatic conditions of the regions in question.

As far as Lafarge was concerned, it committed itself to reducing its carbon dioxide levels by 10 %, which represents a very important effort on its part. Nevertheless, this had been one of the conditions of our partnership. Finally, the group takes part in research on new sustainable and reusable materials and contributes to a programme of bioregional development in the world. Currently, it is also starting to make contact with other NGOs in order to meet different expectations of its shareholders.

The partnership with the Caisses d'Épargne

For us, the importance of a partnership with the Caisses d'Épargne (savings banks) is immense. They have twenty-six million clients in total, in other words one in every two people in France. This type of partnership is also much more "natural" for us, in so far as initially the Caisses d'Épargne were created to provide banking products to populations which were generally excluded from them. Since then, they have kept up the tradition of helping the excluded and of educating the public, something which is important to us.

The Caisses d'Épargne are obliged to put a large percentage of their profits into operations of public interest, which consisted of fifty million Euros in 2002. Up until now, this money was predominantly used for economic services for the unemployed and providing aid to handicapped or old people. We are also going to help them develop programmes in the environmental field, in the knowledge, as I said earlier, that the social and environmental schism often affects the same people.

The Caisses d'Épargne also envisage applying the BedZED programme in France, and since they finance most council housing and regions with a measure of autonomy, this might represent an extraordinary lever. Finally, they allow us to increase public awareness in our activities. Unlike Lafarge, the Caisses have direct contact with millions of people, and especially with their three million members who are often volunteers already committed to different causes and who might then be very receptive to our message.

DISCUSSION

The president's choice

Question : *Daniel Richard, when you whittled down the 3 Suisses catalogue, how did your shareholders react ?*

Daniel Richard : I became president of the company at a time when it was losing a great deal of money. In under a year, I turned the 3 Suisses around and made a significant profit which allowed me to strengthen the trusting relationship that I had with the shareholders and to take decisions which would have been unthinkable in a less favourable situation. I did not try to prove to them that by 'being green' we would become more or less expensive because this is not the case. I said to them « *When one follows this reasoning, one does not make more money, but one exists, the staff exists, and we understand why we work* ».

Nevertheless, for this sort of approach to be possible, it has to be seen that the president is behind it, because he is responsible for the values of the company. It cannot be the managing director, for example. It has happened that we had to refuse a partnership because the president of the company was not involved. For example, in the case of Lafarge, we were in direct contact with Bertrand Collomb himself.

Incalculable costs

Q. : *Does the ecological footprint take into account the energy necessary for the destruction of waste at the end of the line ?*

D. R. : Absolutely. On the other hand, it does not take into account the cost of eliminating nuclear waste in the energy costs since no-one knows how to assess this.

Thanh Nghiem : It does not take into account the exhaustion of groundwater either, nor of pollution by toxic substances since their cost is impossible to calculate.

D. R. : The ecological footprint is calculated at the lowest figure possible : the results would be much worse if one took these factors into consideration. The fact that neither nuclear waste nor water pollution are taken into account is, furthermore, revealing. Our society ignores its waste almost religiously.

Internal qualms

Q. : *In this same conference series, Sister Nicole Reille¹ talked to us about how she came to create the first ethical fund which was intended to finance the retirement of the older sisters of the congregation. She explained to us that the South American nuns strongly protested about the idea of putting money into big industrial groups. « You're going to make a treaty with the devil ! », they said. Can you tell us a bit more about the reactions of your staff when you announced the partnership with Lafarge ?*

D. R. : There was a great deal of discussion and some militants even left the company because they found it unacceptable that the WWF could form a partnership with a company which caused so much pollution. We also met many difficulties on an international level. For example, when we wanted to organise the renovation of quarries in Malaysia, where Lafarge has a considerable presence, the Malay WWF did not seem very enthusiastic about getting involved in the construction. To resolve these difficulties, it was essential that not only the president of Lafarge but also the president of WWF International committed themselves.

However, it is clear that we cannot always go against our militants and our donors. It is they who enable the WWF to exist and ensure its independence. Our resources are effectively completely private which is fortunate at this time. The French government has reduced

¹ Sœur Nicole Reille, *Gérer les biens d'une congrégation en accord avec ses principes (Managing the assets of a congregation in keeping with its principles)*, Les Annales de l'École de Paris du management, Volume IX.

subsidies to environmental associations by 40 %, and many of these associations are in the process of laying off staff and suffering all the ethical problems that this poses in an association.

The assessment of industrial partners

Q. : *How do you assess that Lafarge has implemented its commitments ?*

T. N. : We have regular meetings on the progress of the programme, but we are not a audit agency and we cannot carry out any certification. All that we can do is to measure the commitment of the executive management, and for example check that they do what they say and say what they do. Of course they could always deceive us but if we discovered that this was so, they would run the considerable risk of their company losing face.

Powerless in face of the GDP

Q. : *Your real enemy is the GDP, and even more so since it is the monstrous child of irreproachable parents, namely reason and democracy. Democracy is defined as the government in which the people decide how the state spends money, and they should be able to measure the expenditure. But what else is there to count, apart from the sum of added value ? In any case, it is the easiest calculation to make. However, the state resources are directly correlated to this GDP figure : when growth falls, Jean-Pierre Raffarin is pretty depressed, he can no longer give money, he is less popular, the government is threatened, the end of the world is nigh. Growth measured by the GDP is therefore the linchpin of democracy. You can do nothing about it.*

D. R. : We are well aware that we come from an industrial civilisation which only recognises quantitative measures, the quantitative tools of decision-making and the GDP. Our institutions are old institutions and they perpetuate civilisation, apart from some small circles where one is allowed to think but certainly not to decide. Nevertheless, we know that everything is starting to change, but we are hamstrung by the institutions which themselves virtually never change. In the face of this situation, I can see two solutions : either straightforward opposition which is what the other NGOs do ; or co-operation, with the idea that it is better to cover 60 % of the path than none at all.

Even so, we also know when to close the door when dialogue is really impossible. For example, I consider that at this time we do not have a competent Environment minister. We have resources which are time-limited and energy-limited, and if only out of respect for our members, we cannot allow ourselves to waste them unnecessarily.

T. N. : There are cases where institutions have been able to adapt themselves and have accepted changes in their strategy. In the 1990s, after several years of struggle by NGOs, including the WWF, the Environment minister, Michel Barnier, showed the courage to invest several hundreds of millions of Francs in a scheme different to the one that had been proposed for the Loire river. The EPALA (Établissement public d'aménagement de la Loire), which in the beginning wanted to construct dams over the entire length of the river, understood the benefit of this proposal. Today, the Loire is the last 'natural' river in France, indeed in Europe. It has kept all its natural aspects and has been recognised as a unique heritage in Europe. This proves that even our old institutions can make the right choices, often thanks to the persistence of just one or two people.

Tax measures

Q. : *It is true that the GDP influences the resources of government, and for this reason it is difficult to make government take other indicators into account. There is no doubt that a change in the tax system may make things change. For example, a property tax might be levied on the ecological footprint...*

D. R. : Of course, tax measures constitute a very important lever and practically all our proposals include this possibility.

Q. : *However the State also obtains its resources from activities which create pollution : 75 % of the price of petrol corresponds to taxes which go towards the State !*

D. R. : It is not at all a problem, quite the opposite. If these taxes rose to 150 %, we would applaud them because they would create a fall in petrol consumption and the discharge of carbon dioxide. Then it would be a case of discussing how to use the money acquired from this source but in any case, this would have a considerable impact on urban planning which hitherto was determined by the way cars are used.

The case of Germany

Q. : *Germany is a country where people are very aware of the environment and where one can even see people weighing their waste. Does this have a real impact ?*

R. D. : Without a doubt, yes. The German WWF is very powerful since Germany is a rich country and the Germans are so green that there exists an alliance between the industrialists and the ecologists. The results they achieve are surprising. For example, when the Berlin Wall fell, there were no fish at all in the River Elbe, one of the rivers in East Germany. Following considerable financial outlays, all the polluting factories were closed, the most strategic banks of the Elbe were bought by the German WWF and other associations to avoid new industrial plants, and the river was cleaned up very rapidly. Now, there are over sixty species of fish in the river.

The Germans also devote important sums of money to operations outside their country, as in Africa. They are also extremely active, along with the English and the Dutch, in the European Commission as far as the technical side is concerned. They are different from the French who are present when it is a question of taking political stances, but are almost always absent in technical commissions which devise new regulations.

For or against urban concentration ?

Q. : *Nearly 80 % of the French population live in towns and this proportion is the same or even greater in practically the whole world where this tendency will only become more pronounced in the coming years. What should one do ? We can't envisage demolishing towns !*

D. R. : But we are in favour of urban concentration as well as vertical concentration ! When you see the difference in ecological footprints between outlying habitats which bring about perpetual and numerous movements, and concentrated habitats, you need look no further. Of course, the public transportation system has to be adapted and has to be efficient. For example, it is terrible to see people who live in the nearby Parisian suburbs coming into the centre of Paris in their cars.

Dominique Dupard : All the same, one should moderate this point of view. The social cost of dense human concentrations which we see in our large towns is terrible.

D. R. : Of course. All over the world, towns are growing at such a rate that man, who nevertheless has a very strong capacity for change, does not have the time to adapt himself. But we are confronted with one clear priority, namely to fight against global warming. Its consequences, including the social consequences, are so dramatic that any other subject, even biodiversity, fades into insignificance. In anticipating such a catastrophe for several years we have been working in partnership with different religions. Resorting to spiritual energy will become completely vital in the coming years.

Is 'ecologism' a religion ?

Q. : *It is interesting to know that you work with different faiths since you yourself seem to function a bit like a religion. With an ecological footprint, you redeem the idea of sin which had been destroyed by Freud, and you have had to recite your two Our Fathers and three Hail Marys before boarding the aeroplane for Johannesburg. In addition, you predict the end of the world, just as they did at the beginning of the Christian era when they announced the imminent return of Christ, until, with the passage of time, we became less certain about the timing. What are the rituals of your religion : lying down on a road or attaching oneself to a tree ?*

D. R. : We are an apolitical movement in the sense that our members are both from the right and the left of the political spectrum. We are also a movement which welcomes people from all faiths. As far as rituals particular to the WWF, frankly I can't see any. When I lay down in front of a police car or when I attached myself to a tree, no-one made me do it, and I cannot see myself explaining to new recruits « *the WWF's ritual is to use a chain with a specific size of link in it* ». Furthermore, in view of the fact that we do not have many financial resources, we are often quite happy to accompany and support the actions of local associations, religious or otherwise. For example, in the case of the Loire, we took part in the struggle over a twelve year period, by bringing in money, by paying lawyers and by putting pressure on the institutions. When there was action to be led in the field, it was the local associations who organised it.

T. N. : We should also stress that people's motivations when they join the WWF are extremely varied. Some are really motivated by the environment, others are embittered by their experiences, others have spiritual motivations. In reality, I see far fewer rituals in the WWF than when I worked for McKinsey.

Converting monks to ecology

D. R. : If I had one criticism of Judaeo-Christian religions, it would be that in Genesis, God gave man the right to govern all animal and plant species and this had an enormous impact on our culture. It is also a shame that these religions distanced themselves little by little from nature. In the beginning, their rituals were intimately linked to the seasons and harvesting activities. They have gradually abandoned these practices inspired by agriculture and have adapted themselves to an industrial society in such a way that today they are totally out of their depth when confronted with huge ecological problems. When we organised a meeting between the key people in the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist religions and even the shamans from Latin America at Mont-Saint-Michel, we noticed their difficulty in making the connection between their theological thinking and taking concrete initiatives in favour of the environment.

As far as Catholic monks are concerned, it is true that they have a paradoxical history : they were the important forest clearers and drainers of marshland. Today, we ask them to replant the forest and recreate wet zones ! However, if they agree to become promoters of sustainable development, they will be able to recover their position as role models which they lost. It is in this vein that we financed studies to help two monasteries adopt renewable energy. We are confident that this will give some ideas to the four hundred and fifty other French monasteries and that each monastery within its village will have an impact regarding this aspect on its inhabitants.

D. D. : Monasteries are undoubtedly quite well placed to be in favour of the environment, but as far as the hierarchies are concerned, it's a different matter. Recently, I had quite a heated discussion with the priest of the new parish of La Défense (near Paris), because I was surprised that when this new church was being built, nobody was at all worried about the environment whether it be in the choice of heating or lighting. I am afraid that this priest did not understand this kind of argument at all as he was so removed from this type of thinking !

D. R. : At the inter-religion meeting at Mont Saint-Michel, I also had a discussion with a Buddhist monk who said to me « *We are natural ecologists, because each blade of grass counts for us* ». But when I asked him about the heating system in his monastery, he had to admit that it was fuel-fired, and he looked a bit sheepish. The following year, he sent a young monk to see us who explained in detail the totally new heating system whose source was wood.

Presentation of the speakers :

Dominique Dupard : MBA (Insead). He started his career in the United States (Texas Instruments, Hewlett Packard). After professional retail experience, he was a consultant, partner and managing partner for twenty years in international recruitment agencies (such as Egon Zehnder, TASA AG). He has been an administrator of WWF France since 1988.

Thanh Ngheim : *École des mines de Paris* (P85), MBA (Insead). Having worked for thirteen years in the management consultants McKinsey where she was Partner in France, Asia and Belgium, she joined the management committee of the Suez Group, in the Water division. In 2002, she joined the WWF management committee as a volunteer. In the course of her career, she has been in charge of important development programmes in partnerships with companies, international institutions, collectivities and NGOs. She ran a project breeding-ground/thinktank.

Daniel Richard : he has been an administrator of WWF France since 1997. In 2001, he became President of WWF. He is a telecommunications engineer and graduate of the *École Nationale de l'Aviation Civile*. From 1969 onwards, he worked in several companies of the Brossard Group. In 1983, he joined the group 3 Suisses and became Chairman and Managing Director in 1990. In 1997, he became President of the Sephora Group and in 2001, he became a member of the management committee of Galeries Lafayette, as Director of Innovations and Development.

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