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**Prof. Töpfer, the IASS approaches sustainability as a global issue that requires global approaches. What are the key issues that need to be addressed?**

There is no doubt that a world which will have up to 9 billion people by the middle of this century needs economic development to overcome poverty and to realize the right to development for all people. This can only be achieved if the development is not based on the destruction of ecosystems and their services and not biased by deepening the social divide in the social fabric of societies. Sustainable development, therefore, must be accepted and implemented by each and every one of us throughout the world – from the individual citizen and his consumption patterns via the local communities to the megacities, the nation states, the regional organizations and the global society. This sense of responsibility is the most important precondition for a future-oriented link between economic development, social stability and environmental responsibility.

**How would you describe the current relationship between science and policy-making? And how will the IASS contribute to this relationship?**

Overcoming poverty without destroying environmental stability and without increasing societal tensions requires scientific research and technological progress. They are, in fact, indispensable. In an open society the implementation of new technologies has to be based on understanding and acceptance by civil society. Until now one of the main objectives in the field of science has been to overcome disciplinary boundaries on the basis of solid disciplinary knowledge for interdisciplinary cooperation. What is missing is the integration of citizens in the development of scientific solutions in a transdisciplinary way. The knowledge society urgently needs a new perspective in a “knowledge democracy” with open transparent institutions.

**What are the key steps necessary for modern societies to become sustainable?**

Transdisciplinary challenges are mainly linked to transparency in the decision making processes and technology development as well. To realize this, there must be a reconciliation and a new understanding of progress and “well-being” in an open democratic society. There has to be a critical assessment of the traditional indicators for “development” and “growth.” This should single out the different steps on the way to a “Green Society” with changing behaviour and consumption patterns of the people. By changing their behaviour in this direction, citizens will realize the perspectives and necessities of a “Green Economy.”

**How does the IASS plan to use science to facilitate sustainable transformation?  
And how will effective governance be achieved?**

There is not a “king’s way” which leads directly to a “Great Transformation.” There will not be a big bang. There is a strong and growing conviction that transformation to sustainability will be and has to be a process, a chain of changes with regard to individual behaviour and to a greening of technologies and economic processes.

**Based on the research conducted by TransGov, which global issues will have the greatest impact on sustainability and climate change solutions over the next decade?**

There is no doubt that we need a renewed understanding of “development.” The integration of the regionalized cultural identity of people around the world must be an inherent part of the development process. The world is witnessing a “renaissance of regional identity.” The integration of regional cultural identity of people around the world must be fully incorporated into our understanding of sustainability in the development process. Cultural identity and regional differentiation have to be added to the three pillars of sustainable development that have been accepted until now.