TOWARDS A BLACK-AFRICAN ETHICS FOR CAPITALISTIC OIL AND MINING MULTINATIONALS

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Introduction

Ethics is pertinent to multinational businesses opening in those African zones of great poverty and conflict. Nevertheless, it is much too vague to speak of ethics in general. Is there an ethics for the oil and mining multinationals that are opening in Africa? Put differently, in the event that an African ethics for capitalistic multinational businesses would not exist, can Africans muster the courage to develop their own ethics to propose to or impose on all firms, particularly on Western, Asian, and even African multinationals that want to exploit the oil and mining wealth on the African continent? But before even conceiving of such an ethics, we must first and foremost settle on the principal objective of our intervention: to understand the intrinsic connections between ethics and the political and social economy by going deeper into the modes of regulation of multinational activities starting from a triple, long-lasting developmental approach in Africa: economic performance, social achievement, and respect for the environment. Finally, against the extreme capitalistic theories of Milton Friedman, a plural and holistic approach, integrating the social responsibilities of businesses and linking ethics and business in a harmonious manner, is necessary because it integrates the triple approach of a lasting development. This perspective also permits conceiving of all enterprise as an integral part of the human and

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social community. And it is starting from this *plural and holistic approach* that we can develop a uniquely African ethics for capitalistic multinational businesses that they would have to respect and integrate into their professional code of ethics. That is the reason why, in this article, we fiercely oppose neoclassical and liberal concepts as extolled by the Chicago School in the United States, represented by Milton Friedman (1912-2006).

The Business as a Good Citizen: Definition, History and Philosophy

*What is a “Good Citizen” Business?*

According to Christian Forthomme, one can speak of a “Good Citizen” business if there exists, at its heart, the will to act as responsibly as possible in relation to the environment widely understood.\(^2\) Three main lines emerge from this definition:

**First, Action:** One cannot speak of ethics without speaking of action. Ethics intervenes in order to bring critical judgment to human affairs. It is a feature of ethics to analyze both good and bad, just and unjust human acts. Ethics imparts meaning to action and permits a halt to certain kinds of drift. Given this penchant for action, ethics adds extra heart to action. “In this sense, ethics inscribes itself in the Aristotelian vision for which ethics is a search for meaning starting from actual situations experienced by individuals and groups.”\(^3\) Now, a “Good Citizen” business creates

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\(^3\) Cf. C. FORTHOMME, Des relations avec l’environnement à l’éco-management, *L’Expansion Management review*, n. 82, 60-69.

Ibidem, p. 5.
the kinds of activities that are likely to cause environmental pollution, unemployment, exclusion, poverty, violence, exploitation of the populace, and, in general, to create products that are bad for one's health whose harm could become tolerable or intolerable for future generations. Such being the case, the business must be attentive and sensitive in taking into consideration the legitimate concerns brought up by those populations that are calling for a better quality of life: leaving poverty behind, breathing clean, unpolluted air, consuming uncontaminated food, having decent roads and access to professional education, being well cared for in general.

**Next, Responsibility:** It is evident that all people and every business are responsible for the future of humanity. The invitation to be attentive to the future is an invitation to revisit Hans Jonas’s ethics of responsibility. As Jonas asserts:

Care for the future of mankind is the overruling duty of collective human action in the age of a technical civilization that has become ‘almighty,’ if not in its productive then at least in its destructive potential. This care must obviously include care for the future of all nature on this planet as a necessary condition for man’s own.... A kind of metaphysical responsibility beyond self-interest has devolved on us with the magnitude of our powers relative to this tenuous film of life, since man has become dangerous not only to himself but to the whole biosphere.⁴

For Jonas, all previous ethics is also deployed in the present, immediately and simultaneously with the stability of human nature that such ethics presupposes. There, it is a question of a highly

egoistic and extremely individualistic form of an ethics of self-perfection. Kant’s ethics served as the model for all these prior ethics. There, acting occurs with a view towards the future in which no one benefits, not the agents, their victims, or their contemporaries.

Moving forward, we can conceive of an ethics of the future comprising a temporal extension of a responsibility assumed, an enhanced subject (all of future humanity), and a more profound plan (the entire essence of the future human being). The new types and dimensions of acting necessitate an ethics of prediction and responsibility that finds its roots and source in the works of the homo faber in the age of technology. But henceforth, humankind itself is also a subject of technology. Homo faber applies his art to himself. This domination of technology over humans summons the urgency and importance of the ethics of responsibility.

The domination of technology over humans is made manifest first in the prolongation of the human lifespan (death and procreation are hypothesized as no longer being part of the nature of the living), the control of behaviour (the amount of progress in the biomedical sciences raises serious questions concerning human rights and human dignity), and genetic manipulation (the human desire to take charge of our own evolution with the goal of conserving, improving, and transforming the species according to our purpose). And so, for Jonas, technology would not be able to resolve the problem that it creates; it has gone wild and as a consequence it must be domesticated. We can control nature using the means of a technology that we do not control. Also, traditional morals such as Kant’s, have become ineffectual for political decision makers because of the evolution of modern technology. The ethics of responsibility is forever urgent; it will be founded on the heuristics of a fear that detects the menaces that humanity can experience in its future. “Now, where this [heuristics of fear] is not vouchsafed on its own—that is, by evil already present—it becomes our duty to seek it out by an effort of reason and imagination, so that it can instil in us the fear whose guidance we
need”⁵ because it invites action in order to protect humanity in relation to the menaces it could be subjected to. All active responsibility commences in response to fear.

**Finally, The Environment:** In effect, responsible action leads to respect for the environment. Because of modern technology, the world experiences changes, mutations, disruptions, and such novel consequences that even traditional ethics is no longer capable of taking them on. Human technological intervention has made nature vulnerable. Such vulnerability had never been sensed before manifesting itself as a result of damage caused by human technology. It is thanks to the new science of the environment (ecology) that humans have become aware of our responsibility towards the natural world as a result of the impact provoked by damage that is tied to technology. Nature, as an object of human responsibility, presents itself as a novelty on which ethics must reflect. As a result, businesses must not remain unaware of this important dimension of lasting development. According to Hans Jonas, the most serious danger is in regard to the equilibrium of the world’s ecosystem. “Good Citizen” firms must respect and practice a consistent categorical imperative with regard to the survival of future generations, the survival of humanity. “Act such that the effects of your act may not be destructive to the future possibility of such a life”. Or simply: “Don’t compromise the conditions for the indefinite survival of humanity on earth.”⁶

**The History of the Concept of the Business as a Good Citizen**

The concept of the “Good Citizen” business comes to us from the United States. It came into existence in the 1970’s across the Atlantic with the intent of showing off the participation of

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⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 27.
⁶ Cf., *Ibidem*, p. 43-44..
businesses in cultural, social, and sports activities. "Community services" are created within the business in which a large number of employees participate voluntarily. Such businesses demonstrate their engagement and dynamic participation to the life of the society by investing in hospitals, schools, and charitable works.

The Philosophy Conveyed by the Concept of the Business as a Good Citizen

First and foremost, the "Good Citizen" business opposes the dissociation in history that has occurred between economics and ethics. However, according to Amartya Sen, the modern economy has, in essence, issued forth from ethics. Adam Smith, the father of the modern economy, was a professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow. The economy was long considered a branch of ethics. We know that ethics goes back at least to Aristotle: "At the very beginning of The Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle relates the subject of economics to human ends. He sees politics as 'the master art'. Politics must use 'the rest of the sciences', including economics, and 'since, again, it legislates as to what we are to do and what we are to abstain from, the end of this science must include those of the others, so that this end must be the good of man....Economics relates ultimately to the study of ethics and that of politics, and this point of view is further developed in Aristotle's Politics." From this perspective, the "Good Citizen" business comes to consecrate the marriage between ethics and politics.

Then, the "Good Citizen" business brings together the ethics and technologies that have been separated in the history of Western philosophy. We recognize this in the metaphysics of Heidegger: because of technology, the Western world lives in exile from Being

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8 Ibidem, p. 3.
as Being. The German philosopher maintains that technology has become the extreme form of the forgetfulness of Being in today’s world. Technology does not only refer to the totality of machines, methods, and ideas intended for production. It is the manner in which modern humans relate to the world around them. Both humanity and the natural world constitute merely a fund, capital, from which technology draws. And so, technology engulfs humanity in its power; it holds humanity in its power and thus hostage far from Being. Technology occupies every space because of the void hollowed out by the forgetfulness of Being. Heidegger wants to fill in this void. According to him, only humanity can save itself by turning towards Being. It is not a question of rejecting technology, from the perspective of Heideggerian ontology, but rather of confronting it and exposing the extreme danger that it constitutes so that we may be liberated from it. 

Heidegger’s thought will be followed in one way or another by the Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas in his ethical turn that clearly energizes the problematic of responsibility. How does one assume responsibility towards the other? “Otherwise Than Being,” by nature ethical, bears unlimited responsibility for the Other. The Other is not to be dominated, but rather affects Me in the midst of the ethical relation. And Hans Jonas prolongs this question in relation to the future of humanity.

Finally, the “Good Citizen” business comes to link business with social issues, profit with engagement and citizen participation in the social development of the milieu in which all businesses can fulfil their activities. The “Good Citizen” business wants to demonstrate that preoccupation with societal issues is not an antinomy; it accompanies a preoccupation with economics. “The ‘Good Citizen’ business expresses its involvement in the life of the town through concern about the environment, rehabilitation, and insertion. Its field of action is not only economic, in relation to its

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particular interests, but it extends to that which elevates this area to the general interest.

It should be noted that the recurring reference to the concept of the ‘Good Citizen’ business is tied to the development of unemployment and poverty. The end of the 1980’s marks a rupture with the economic law connecting growth to the diffusion of wealth to all of society. A society that counts six million of the excluded is harmful and dangerous for business; a poor social climate produces a lowering of consumption in favour of protective savings. It is in this context that businesses decide to take the ‘Good Citizen’ initiative, implicitly recognizing their responsibility for that which certain parties call the fracturing of society.”

The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits

In the 1970’s, at the origin of the debate over the “Good Citizen” business, the economist Milton Friedman was drastically opposed to this ethical concept. Here is what he said in an article appearing in The New York Times Magazine on September 13, 1970:

The businessmen believe that they are defending free enterprise when they declaim that business is not concerned ‘merely’ with profit but also with promoting desirable ‘social’ ends; that business has a ‘social conscience’ and takes seriously its responsibilities for providing employment, eliminating discrimination, avoiding pollution and whatever else may be the catchwords of the contemporary crop of reformers. In fact they are... preaching pure and unadulterated socialism. Businessmen who talk this way are unwitting puppets of the intellectual

10 Christian Forthomme, as quoted by K.-O. Baya, « L’entreprise citoyenne une approche par les normes environnementales », 4ème Congrès international francophone sur les PME. Compétitivité et identité des PME. Défis et enjeux dans un monde en mutation. p. 7.
forces that have been undermining the basis of a free society these past decades.\textsuperscript{11}

Starting from his thesis, we take note of the fact that Mr. Friedman ascribes central importance to the idea of freedom. First and foremost in his estimation, a society must be founded on economic freedom. In what does such freedom consist? It advocates a free market with the free exchange of goods and services while accepting free competition. Mr. Friedman is a partisan supporter of an excessively free capitalism; he recommends commercial liberalism with minimal and weak intervention by the state within a society without causing any hindrance to individual free enterprise. Economic freedom is the \textit{sine qua non} of political freedom. Economic freedom gives power to shareholders; it presents itself as a counterweight to political power by influencing, accompanying, supporting and opposing it. In the aforementioned quote it is surprising to see his elision of social responsibility into socialism. We can highlight three fundamental arguments in his thought:

\textbf{First Argument:} According to Mr. Friedman, a business must in no way bear social responsibilities; people can have them all by taking them on. But a business is an artificial person so it can only bear artificial responsibilities. Because of this one is not able to speak of social responsibilities belonging to the business; one can only talk of the increase in profits while respecting the rules.

\textbf{Second Argument:} The director who has been hired by the business must act in the sole interest of the shareholders, which is nothing other than increasing profits. And outlays made by the business concerning social responsibility reduce profits. This theory, commonly known as the “theory of the shareholder” does

not exclude respect of and recourse to the ethical rules in force in a society. To claim that the director bears social responsibilities is tantamount to claiming that he or she must act contrary to the interests of his or her employers. A substantial social responsibility participating in the reduction of poverty leads it, for example, to hire the chronically unemployed rather than better qualified and available workers.

**Third Argument:** As a result, the business only has one social responsibility—it must use the resources it has to create activities with a view towards increasing profits while respecting an ethical minimum. As long as it respects the society’s rules of commerce, it must engage in open and free competition, without deceit or fraud.\(^{12}\) His argument is deontological; the director has the duty to honour his or her promises without regard for the consequences.

**Consequences—African Example:** Friedman has had several adversaries who have criticized his thought. And one of the most important critiques concerns his monistic point of view regarding the ends that a business can set, in contradistinction to a holistic and pluralistic perspective that recognizes the business as a moral agent that is responsible for its acts and not an aggregate of individuals as Mr. Friedman believes. His critics uphold the fact that a business pursues various ends, particularly those of all of the parties involved, and not only the maximization of shareholder wealth. Mr. Friedman’s monistic and individualistic perspective ensures that the business is not a structure that is absorbed and integrated within human society but rather an island, an atom without any direct link to society and indeed cut off from it. In Africa, many multinationals, particularly those concerned with oil and mining, function in isolation, without any direct relation to human societies. They are in Africa with the only goal to exploit the continent; they care about nothing else in their mafiocracy, as if they remained cut off from the population without provoking conflict, war, trouble. And if the pillage they organize on a grand

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\(^{12}\) *Ibidem*, 82.
scale doesn’t suffice, they continue to sell arms to dictators in order to perpetuate their power; they provoke not only the displacement of local populations who become strangers in their own countries, but above all they kill and massacre those who resist their exploitation. In sum, these multinational businesses do not respect human dignity in Africa and they do not promote a life together among local populations because of their dishonest exploitation of the continent’s wealth.

Towards a Black-African Ethics for Capitalistic and Multinational Businesses

Given such a situation, what kind of African ethics should be proposed to both African and foreign capitalistic multinationals that exploit oil and mining resources? African societies are founded on an anthropological conception that is different from anthropology in the West. And African anthropology is not monistic and individualistic; it is an anthropological community of the visible and the invisible. According to Black-African societies’ customs, traditions, and cultures, the human person is comparable to an embryo that bathes, at one and the same time, in the love of the visible community and in relation to the invisible community.¹³ What do we mean by this assertion? It is impossible in Africa to conceive of the individual outside of his or her inscription in his or her milieu of life, or outside of his or her relation to living or dead fellow humans. It is impossible to understand and seize hold of oneself outside of a relation to the visible and invisible cosmos where the ancestral village is presumed to be located. One’s historical inscription in one’s native cultural milieu signals one’s membership in human life. And one’s relation to the world and nature signals one’s membership in the cosmos.

The Human Person is Fundamentally Life in Relation to His or Her Fellow Humans.

What is singular to the African, and particularly to the Bantu, is his or her attachment to life. This fierce attachment to life as lived leads to a categorical refusal of death. Placide Tempels, a Belgian Franciscan missionary, was the first to formulate philosophically this visceral Bantu love of life.\textsuperscript{14} This life to which the Bantu are attached is called the Vital Force. The vital force is the fundamental reality of the existential life of the Bantu person. It is the supreme worth that determines the fundamental aspiration of the Bantu person desirous of living infinitely. It is susceptible of increasing or decreasing. It inhabits not only human beings but also the other creatures of the universe. The central vision of the African, his or her faith and fundamental creed, is summed up in a sole existential paradigm: \textbf{Life as the first and last reality, as the value of values}. Life is the alpha and omega of the African person’s existence. Everything proceeds from life and everything is fulfilled and achieved in life. Let us recover briefly the summary of Elanga Pene Elungu over the conception of life, a spiritual heritage common to most African traditions. He shows that: “(1) the life that is mine is also fundamentally my life after my death. (2) It is my life in the clan, my substantial communion with the ancestors, those ‘alive’ and those to come in the future for they are the same. (3) It is also my participation in the other lives of the universe, other realities or forces. (4) Finally, it is my union with the source of life, the Father of everything, God.”\textsuperscript{15} This African creed imparts meaning to the ultimate mystery of death. Death is conquered in advance by belief in surviving it. Death is conceived as a simple passage from this world to the village of the ancestors.

As Placide Tempels showed, it is possible, beginning from this vital force, to develop an entire African philosophy, a Black-African ethics, and a Bantu ethics for the foreign and African multinationals that exploit oil and mining resources. And when a Black African speaks of Life as the fundamental reality and Value, he or she refers to everything that touches his or her entire existence, globally speaking. Life refers to the political, economic, environmental, and social progress of humanity in the midst of society, with a view not only of arriving at lasting development but also and especially of arriving at the growth, the blossoming, and the plenitude of life. Life refers to health, the environment, security, work conditions, taxation, the creation of jobs, the professionalization of employees… in short, life refers to the blossoming, the happiness of the African. A multinational corporation that wants to do business in Africa has to work for the respect and the dignity of the human person; in brief, it must work in favour of Life. That would be the first condition, the fundamental condition of every signed contract with any multinational. It is not because of wealth that one must humiliate, displace, massacre—in brief, exterminate—human lives. Ever since the observations of the Commission of the United Nations directed by John Harker in 2002, the Canadian Talisman Energy Company has been recognized for having not only exploited the oil of Sudan but also having participated in the massacre of civilians in complicity with the government of Khartoum. Canadian Talisman had participated in the expulsion during a five-month period (forced displacements, burned villages, summary executions, planned famine, incitement to rape, proslavery…) of local populations from their lands with the plan to proceed with the exploitation of oil. This campaign of terror and violence towards the civilian population did nothing but augment the armed conflict in Sudan between the government forces and those fighting for the independence of South Sudan, directed by Riek Machar and the
Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), formed by former mutineers from the Sudanese military forces. The permanent council of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), during its plenary session in Accra (Ghana) in May, 1977, the president of SECAM, Cardinal Paul Zoungrana, Archbishop of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, was indignant over the potential “Recolonization” of Africa! In the words of the Cardinal:

Because it is rich in enviable strategic points, and simultaneously in prime materials that are practically inexhaustible, Africa is the object of the developed nations’ covetousness. We must say it aloud; a recolonization is taking place. It is often ideological and it follows commercial and military interests, preventing Africans, who have an innate sense of dialogue and also of particular dispositions for consultation, from agreeing about the workable ways and means of obtaining a better evolution of the continent. Left to themselves, Africans would settle their problems amicably. We must take note that the continent would not be so violently troubled in our time if there were not Africans who lend themselves, consciously or unconsciously, to the game of colonialism on all sides, tempted by wealth or power. Faced with such a situation, there is only one alternative: either renounce one’s dignity by accepting to become ‘subject peoples’ again, or rally again to proclaim together a categorical no to colonialism and imperialism no matter their provenance and no matter under what form they present themselves. Salvation can only come from the second response, which is already engaged in the process of political independence. It seems to us that such a response that is indispensable to survival

and development must take on paths that we would like to recall briefly.\textsuperscript{17}

It is readily apparent that Western, Asian, and even African forms of capitalism—in short capitalism of all types—is devoid of a soul; we must think, rethink, deconstruct, and reconstruct this. The wealth that Africa abounds in ought to contribute to the promotion, development, and blossoming of African life. Western, Asian, and African multinationals who do not respect human rights or the African’s right to life must cease their activities in Africa. We must prohibit these corporations from pursuing the business of blood\textsuperscript{18} in Africa because they violate laws that are acknowledged internationally, and they also violate the African vision of the world founded upon an anthropology of life. The minerals of blood of which C. Boltanski speaks are nothing other than the cassiterite that we find everywhere in our cell phones, radios, televisions, jewellery, watches ...but at what cost? At the cost of African blood! From the mines of North-Kivu, where African miners disappear under ground at the peril of their lives to the beautiful Towers of Defense in Paris where global corporations feign to ignore the route that the minerals take; from the Africa of forgotten wars to the \textit{London Stock Metal Exchange}, from the offices of Malaya to the garbage dumps under the open sky of Ghana, passing through Brussels, Paris, London, New York, and Toronto, C. Boltanski’s book presents us with the lovely, post-colonialist


images of the globalization of capital, the obscure influences of multinationals and the politics that enslave, pillage, and set Africa back.

**The Human Person is Also Fundamentally Life in Relation to the Surrounding World.**

Cosmogony occupies an important place in the Black-African vision of the world. What is the Black-African person’s connection to the environment? According to Black-African cosmogonic belief, the individual lives in relation to a nature that is both hostile and benevolent. Given this relation to the world that surrounds the individual, the responsibility of multinational businesses must increase and become a true sensitivity to permitting Africans to actually live healthy lives without polluted air, erosion, and with a vegetation that is well watered by rain. The mining businesses like Katanga Mining Limited that dig in the open, leaving holes everywhere as is the case today in the Democratic Republic of Congo or Ghana but also the holes left by Barrick Gold at Bulyanhulu in Tanzania, expose villages and towns to erosion, cut down the vegetation and provoke drought as a result. Foreign and African mining companies must preoccupy themselves with the environment because of the future of the regions in which they exploit natural resources. Oil corporations should also occupy themselves with the security and the health of the population in oil pipeline transports to the port of loading and unloading. At Sange, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, an entire village was burned with more than 500 casualties because of the accidental explosion of a tractor-trailer truck carrying fuel. None of the families has been compensated. Even the current government of Joseph Kabila remained indifferent to a tragedy of such magnitude by not following up with legal proceedings. From this perspective, instead of considering the local population as animals that must be decimated without any justice, multinational businesses must
instead cooperate with such populations in order to strengthen their sanitary conditions and educational possibilities—in short, to work for full justice.

**African Person Living as a “Being with Others”**

The African person cannot fulfil his or her capacities except by living as a “being with others” and by participating thus to the development of the life of the society. This final ethical axis allows for getting back to social investment and not the socialism, contrary to Friedman’s thesis, according to which a business’s only social responsibility is to increase its profits while respecting a moral minimum. It is unacceptable for a multinational business spending billions of dollars exploiting natural resources to be uninterested in those affected by its activities by being left in poverty and in even greater misery. *Being with others* in Africa presupposes participation and engagement in promoting a life of clan, tribe, ethnic, and professional solidarity. In African societies marked by interpersonal relations, a multinational business, regardless of its status, cannot conduct itself like an atom; it must be an integral part of the social and life milieu in which it operates. Because of its integration into social networks, it cannot divest itself of its social responsibilities. It must take them on by investing in health, education, and infrastructure—in short it must work in a win-win and not a win-lose partnership with the local government and civil society in order to develop the social environment. This social and entrepreneurial engagement is capable of influencing its economic productivity and increasing its profits but it is also capable of lending itself credibility by attracting more clients and consumers of its products. If Friedman’s thought, consisting of a business’s accumulation of colossal profits come what may, can be well understood in the Western context of individualistic culture dominated by neoliberal capitalism, his thought would have trouble succeeding in an African context characterized by a holistic culture.
It would have trouble being understood and it would function as an economic ideology disconnected from the local reality. In brief, "African ethics want to promote life in abundance, but this is impossible unless one respects the diversity among cultures. Such diversity, far from being an impoverishment, is an unheard-of opportunity and blessing, whereas globalization is a cultural cloning that wants to impose a monoculture that can only be dictatorial and oppressive. On the contrary, the world will be unable to enhance the strength and fullness of life and to recover peace unless one respects the plurality of cultures that may be in dialogue with one another."  

Conclusion:

What, finally, do we want to support with this article? Capitalistic mining and oil multinationals operating in Africa can become *citizen businesses*, that is, businesses that offer more to humanity than the simple development of their capital. This is why we are against the neoclassical and liberal concepts of the Chicago School represented by the American economist Milton Friedman. For him a business has only one responsibility: the increase in profits. From the moment that the business engages in open and free competition without deceit or fraud, it must utilize all of its resources to engage in commercial and economic activities to augment its profits. In the setting of free market economics, the only responsibility a business's director has is to work in the interest of his or her shareholders. Because of this, the Chicago School opposes the business world to the moral world—business to human. Rather than a monistic and individualistic ideology, we unequivocally support a harmonious co-existence between profits and ethics, between maximizing shareholder profits and the social responsibility of businesses vis-à-vis society. Such responsibility comprises three

19 B. Bujo, *op. cit.* p. 149.
dimensions: economic or social responsibility, societal responsibility, and environmental responsibility (*Triple Bottom Line*). The worldwide performance of a multinational would henceforth rest on its economic performance, social engagement, and the environmental sensitivity that would permit such a business to attain its objective of lasting development. 20

Speaking of *economic or social performance*, every society must have economic profitability in order to satisfy workers and anticipate social investment. There are five aspects that we must consider: competence, training, working conditions and life in the business, sanitation and security in the business, remuneration. On the subject of *environmental sensitivity*, since businesses consume natural resources, produce waste and emit different kinds of pollution, they are held accountable for putting in place policies that protect the environment. They have several obligations: reducing their carbon emissions, reducing the toxicity of their products, reducing the risks that their activities weigh on the environment (e.g. oil slicks, excessively risky transport of petroleum products...), investing in favour of the environment (e.g. reforestation). The *social responsibility* relates to all activities external to the business, for example, the charters that a business furnishes to its suppliers or stockholders, the financing of foundations, humanitarian associations. In Canada, Canadian Tire imposes an ethical code on its foreign suppliers regarding provisioning, such that foreign suppliers understand and respect the nature of the business relations that Canadian Tire will maintain with them. This code of ethics clearly forbids all of Canadian Tire's

foreign suppliers and even their subcontractors from using child labour or the labour of minors for the sole purpose of using and even exploiting them for economic ends. Numerous businesses participate in the development of the territories in which they are active through the construction of schools, roads, hospitals or other services for the local populations. At Kiliba in the Democratic Republic of Congo, before the war of liberation conducted by Laurent Desire Kabila in 1997, the sugar industry, a multinational under joint Belgian-Congolese state control, not only transformed sugar cane into sugar but also invested in the social life by supporting education and health initiatives. The sugar refinery of Kiliba created a primary and secondary school, built a hospital, not state of the art but suited to the size of the city, in order to care for the local population; it built homes for its employees, etc. It is truly about a social investment in the local economy. In short, “businesses themselves want to be ‘citizens:’ they create foundations, engage in protecting the environment and financing schools in countries with a view towards development, declare their desire to promote human rights....”21 From this perspective, the ethical business not only becomes an economic actor but also a social and territorial one. It adheres to internal values in the professional sphere by the salaries it pays and its social environment, its values of professional honesty and its respect for persons...but it also adheres to external values that refer to solidarity and equity.22 The ethical business plays a primary role in the worldwide environment of the human community. Nevertheless, when referring to Africa, Western, Asian, and African capitalistic multinationals must work to respect life, that is, the dignity of the human person and respect for human rights. They must work to respect a healthy and viable environment. Every business activity should be conducted by taking account of the

cultural values of each people, nation, and continent. In Africa, it would be impossible to promote capitalistic, monistic, and individualistic forms of exploitation leaving thousands of people in poverty. The business is not an atom; it must inscribe itself in a viable environment. It is a compelling member of the society in which it acts; because of this it must assume its social responsibilities. Using a holistic and pluralistic approach, the wealth of the African continent should be exploited such that Africans benefit, acceding to a quality of life that allows them to blossom and accords them much joy, permitting them to recover their human dignity. In short, the wealth of our countries must be exploited with the aim of strengthening the Vital Force in Africa.

Being-with-others presupposes the participation and civil engagement towards developing a social existence with all of the actors of the society in a win-win partnership with local governments, civil societies and capitalistic multinationals.

*Translated from the French by Marie L. Baird, Ph.D., Duquesne University*