

CRT PRINCIPLES FOR GOVERNMENT

INTRODUCTION

Persuaded by experience that a person's moral sense contributes to success in business endeavors, in 1994 the Caux Round Table published certain *Principles for Business* as a world standard against which business behavior could be measured.

After a decade of remarkable economic growth in many parts of the global economy, the Caux Round Table notes that sufficient investment capital has been accumulated that, should it be invested wisely in poor and developing countries, a dramatic reduction in levels of poverty could be achieved for most of humanity. In the stock markets of the world some thirty trillion US dollars are available for equity investment. Trillions more of US dollars are available in short term money markets, in currency markets, and in possible debt financing. There is more liquid capital available to the owners of private business than poor countries could presently absorb into their economies.

Yet in most instances such capital is not invested where people are poor. In the minds of many, therefore, globalization remains vulnerable to a moral critique that it does not, and, some would say that it can never, achieve social justice. The Caux Round Table believes that, while private business can improve standards of living through the creation of wealth, business only responds to opportunities for profitable exchange. The investment of capital waits upon favorable conditions; such investment is reactive and selective, always searching for well-founded expectations of return as well as for security that those expectations will come to fruition.

It is the work of others, not primarily that of business, to create the fundamental conditions under which capital can be invested. Bluntly, it is in the first place the task of responsible government to provide for sustained wealth-creation. Business can be called upon to invest responsibly within the framework of the Caux Round Table's *Principles for Business* once governments erect and sustain the requisite infrastructure of laws, regulations, and physical improvements to transportation and communication.

Bad government is a short cut to endemic poverty.

Therefore, the Caux Round Table offers the following *Principles for Government* in the expectation that better government around the world will attract greater investment of private capital to create more wealth for poor people.

Just as the *Principles for Business*, these *Principles for Government* derive from two ethical ideals: "Kyosei" and "Human Dignity". The Japanese concept of "Kyosei" looks to living and working together for the common good while the moral vision of "Human Dignity" refers to the sacredness or value of each person as an end, not simply as a means to the fulfillment of others' purposes or even of majority demands.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Public power is held in trust for the community

Power brings responsibility; power is a necessary moral circumstance in that it binds the actions of one to the welfare of others.

Therefore, the power given by public office is held in trust for the benefit of the community and its citizens. Officials are custodians only of the powers they hold; they have no personal entitlement to office or the prerogatives thereof.

Holders of public office are accountable for their conduct while in office; they are subject to removal for malfeasance, misfeasance or abuse of office. The burden of proof that no malfeasance, misfeasance or abuse of office has occurred lies with the office holder.

The state is the servant and agent of higher ends; it is subordinate to society. Public power is to be exercised within a framework of moral responsibility for the welfare of others. Governments that abuse their trust shall lose their authority and may be removed from office.

2. Discourse should guide application of public power.

Public power, however allocated by constitutions, referendums or laws, shall rest its legitimacy in communicative action and discourse among autonomous moral agents who constitute the community to be served by the government. Free and open discourse, embracing independent media, shall not be curtailed except to protect legitimate expectations of personal privacy, sustain the confidentiality needed for the proper separation of powers, or for the most dire of reasons relating to national security.

1. The Civic Order must not forget its duties to citizens.

Public power constitutes a civic order for the safety and common good of its members. The civic order, as a moral order, protects and promotes the integrity, dignity, and self-respect of its members in their capacity as citizens and, therefore, avoid all measures, oppressive and other, whose tendency is to transform the citizen into a subject. The state shall protect, give legitimacy to, or restore all those principles and institutions which sustain the moral integrity, self-respect, and civic identity of the individual citizen, and which serve to inhibit the processes of civic estrangement, dissolution of the civic bond, and civic disaggregation. This protects the citizen's capacity to contribute to the well-being of the civic order itself.

4. Corruption may not be condoned.

Public office is not to be used for personal advantage, financial gain or as a prerogative manipulated by arbitrary personal desire. Corruption – financial, political and moral – is inconsistent with stewardship of public interests. Only the Rule of Law is consistent with a principled approach to use of public power.

5. Security of persons, individual liberty and ownership of property are the foundation for individual justice.

The civic order, through its instrumentalities, shall provide for the security of life, liberty and property for its citizens in order to insure domestic tranquility.

The civic order shall defend its sovereign integrity, its territory, and its capacity to pursue its own ends to the maximum degree of its own choice and discretion, within the framework of international law and principles of natural justice.

6. Justice shall be provided.

The civic order and its instrumentalities shall be impartial among citizens without regard to condition, origin, sex or other fundamental, inherent attributes. Yet the civic order shall distinguish among citizens according to merit and desert where rights, benefits or privileges are best allocated according to effort and achievement, rather than as birth-rights.

The civic order shall provide speedy, impartial and fair redress of grievances against the state, its instruments, other citizens and aliens.

The Rule of Law shall be honored and sustained, supported by honest and impartial tribunals and legislative checks and balances.

7. General welfare contemplates improving the well-being of individual citizens.

The state shall nurture and support all those social institutions, most conducive to the free self-development and self-regard of the individual citizen. Public authority shall seek to avoid, or to ameliorate, conditions of life and work which deprive the individual citizen of dignity and self-regard or which permit to powerful citizens the exercise of dutiless opportunities of exploitation of the weak.

The state has a custodial responsibility to manage and conserve the material and other resources that sustain the present and future well-being of the community.

8. Transparency of government ensures accountability.

The civic order shall not act with excessive secrecy or provide its citizens with inadequate information as to the acts and intentions of the civic order and its instruments, which secrecy or withholding of information would prevent its citizens from acting the citizen's part in the discourse providing the civic order with its authoritative legitimacy.

9. Global cooperation advances national welfare.

Governments should establish both domestic and international conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; live together in peace as good neighbors; and employ international machinery and systems for the promotion of economic and social advancement.

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