Keynote Speaker of Basic Income Workshop
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Good morning,
It is a great honour to be the first keynote speaker at the first public event of the Social Policy Forum and I hope, on behalf of all the speakers who are going to be following me, that you will recall with pleasure the success of the first meeting when you have your tenth meeting and when you have your hundredth meeting. And I very much hope that both BIEN and the ILO will still be working with you.

It is also a great honour to be in Istanbul again, after 30 years, and to see that it is a very modern, thriving city and very much a cosmopolitan and European city in the way it feels.

The choice of subject for your first public meeting is appropriate because we are trying to look forward to what social policy should be about in the 21st century and address the great challenges of what I regard as the second Great Transformation. I agree with the previous speaker in the thrust of his remarks on that subject.

Recently we have produced a number of books on the subject of this event, and if you are interested in them, we could send you copies.1 We have produced a book on developments of basic income in South Africa; several people here have contributed to that. We have also done an assessment of minimum income schemes in Europe. Bea Cantillon and several others have contributed to that. And we have conducted a global review of economic and social policy developments that puts Turkey very much in the centre of the world in social policy terms, in the sense that – with respect – you are not doing as well as you should do for your level of economic and cultural development and degree of civilization. There is a great deal that should be done in Turkey to move you up from 56th position on our index of economic security, out of a total of 90 countries for which we have adequate data, to a much higher position.

What I would like to do, briefly, is talk about the context in which to think about the potential of basic income. I always think of it in terms of Karl Polanyi’s great book, the Great Transformation. The theme that I have learned from thinking about it over the years is that for a period of stability – social and economic stability – to exist, any system must embed the economic forces in society. And to embed the economy in society, you need three things: A functioning system of regulation, a functioning system of social protection and a functioning system of redistribution, which together provide an overall system for moderating the insecurities and inequalities, both to legitimise the progress of that economic system and to allow a degree of tolerance by those who are not the winners in that particular society.

Quite clearly, we are in the midst of a new Great Transformation, when the old 20th century systems of regulation, protection and distribution have broken down. There is no doubt about it. Inequalities and insecurities have been growing, and the violence, the intolerance and the lack of social solidarity are very clear to most of us. So we need to look for new systems appropriate for the new economic forces and economic relations of production.

With that in mind in the background, I find it useful to pose two normative questions when looking at social policy: The first normative question would be something like this: Behind a Rawlsian veil of ignorance (i.e., not knowing where they would be in the distribution of outcomes), what kind of society would we like to leave for our children? What type of society? The second big question is this: Since all theories – and we all have some theory of distributive justice – believe in the equality of something, what

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is it in the 21st century that should be equalized for the emergence of a good society, be it Turkey or anywhere else?

My answer, in a book called “Beyond the New Paternalism”, is essentially that what must be equalized is basic security. Everybody needs basic security in order to function, in order to be responsible, in order to develop their competencies and capabilities. Without basic security, you should not expect too much from people, because it is unfair.

Basic security is the essence of real freedom. And real freedom recalls Isaiah Berlin’s famous two liberties – negative liberty and positive liberty. Negative liberty is the absence of controls over us, over you. Liberty is enhanced by the removal of controls by whomever, be it capital, be it the state, the tyrants, be it Washington. Positive liberty is security for our own self-control, for our own development and a sense of autonomy in which to develop ourselves as human beings, within a community of human beings.

As those of you who are familiar with the basic income debate appreciate, that is where many of us come into the debate. Before going into the global context, let me, for those of you not familiar with the idea of basic income security, define each of the key words.

First and most importantly, we are talking about a right, an economic and social right. This is essentially a republican or claim right, developed by Rousseau and many other social thinkers, including Thomas Paine obviously and many others. As a claim right, we are talking about assessing policies and institutions that move towards the realization of that right. A right – and this point is important given the way social policy debates have evolved in recent years – a right is unconditional. It is unconditional in behavioural terms. You do not have a right if you have to do x, y, z and a, b and c in order to have an entitlement. That is not a right. A right is a right.

The second thing we are talking about is basic security. Basic means it must be meaningful, not a gesture, but not so much that it leads to indolence and loss of motive to function, enough in order to be able to make rational choices in a community. It must be basic and it must be meaningful.

Finally, for basic income security, the income must come in a form that is non-paternalistic. I do not give it to you as a discretionary gesture, in the goodness of my heart; it is not charity. It must be in a form that you can decide how you use it. It must be individual and must be equal, with supplements for those with special needs, for disabilities or frailties. It must be in a form to enable people to make rational choices.

With that definition, or with those conceptual parts of the definition, there are also two policy principles that are worth mentioning that should guide us in thinking about re-distributive and protection policies. The first one, drawing on John Rawls, is what I call “the security difference principle”. This goes something like this: A policy or an institutional change is socially just only if it improves the security of the least secure groups in society.

The second principle by which we should assess policies and institutions is what I call “the paternalism test principle”. I believe this has been seriously neglected by social policy advisers and politicians in the last ten years in Europe and elsewhere. The paternalism test principle goes like this: A policy or an institutional change is just only if it does not impose controls on some groups in society that are not imposed on the most free groups in society. That, of course, relates to workfare and a number of other policies that have been evolving.

Now, step back from those normative principles for a moment and think of the global context in which Turkey, Spain, Britain, South Africa, all of us are fitting. The key thing about this phase of globalization, and the great transformation, is the imposition of the so-called Washington Consensus. This should actually be called the Washington Dictat, because a lot of the world does not share that consensus. In any case, it is a coherent set of policies designed to promote liberalization, open economies, competitiveness, individualism, mass consumption, and so on. We can all identify the features.

For our discussion, there are a few key elements that should be emphasized. First, it believes in a shrinking state, cutting public spending, shifting public spending from social protection to “human capital” and “social capital” and other “capitals” that they can multiply as they wish. Essentially, it wants to cut back the state.

The second is a shift towards regressive fiscal policy. Fiscal policy has not received the attention it deserves in the social policy debates but clearly there have been profound changes around the world, which we document in this report. What has been happening as a result of the Washington Dictat is there have been cuts on subsidies for workers and working class communities and the poor because they are called “market distortions”, so you must remove them. At the same time they have been introducing expensive subsidies to capital all over the world. Something like 4% of global GDP goes in subsidies to capital. These are justified, supposedly, on the basis of incentives to invest, not as distortions. And to make things even better, they have been shifting the incidence of tax, so tax on capital has gone way down while tax on labour has gone up in relative terms. So you have a double effect of subsidies and taxes, which are regressive in both respects.

There is something even more invidious than that, which I will come back to later, which is that fiscal policy has become part of social policy; steering people to behave in certain ways and trying to stop them behave in other ways. So, rather than have a redistributive and macro-economic effect as fiscal policy used to have in Keynesian times, it has become directive and regressive.

A third feature I want to emphasize is the creeping conditionality at all levels of social policy, from the global level – through the WTO and the GATS (the General Agreement on Trades in Services), which is going to be a major instrument for the liberalization and individualization of social protection and social policy – right the way down through national levels to local levels, where, if anybody wants some support, they have to fulfil more and more conditions.

Finally, this has been a period of re-regulation. Anybody who says this has been an era of deregulation should be told to take up gardening because they do not know much about social policy. There have been more new regulations introduced in this era of so-called deregulation than at any time in history. What has changed is the character of regulations: Instead of being predominantly protective, they have shifted to being more promotional; instead of being pro-collective, they are tending to be anti-collective and pro-individualist. But do not kid yourself, we are in a period of regulation.

Now, the outcomes of the Washington Dictat and all that goes with it, have been extraordinary. We have growth of so-called “labour market flexibility” all over the world, which means more precariousness, more insecurity, more short-term, temporary, casual labour, etc., etc., with all the implications that brings. And we have global informalization, the famous “informal sector”, a term I hate – better to call it “lumpenization at the bottom” or some other term that we are not allowed to use these days because it might give away our intellectual roots.

In a sense, we are looking at a reversal of the Arthur Lewis model of development. Those of you who are development economists will remember that the essence of Lewis’s model of unlimited supply of labour is that gradually there would be a shift from the traditional or informal sector to the modern, productive
sector. But in developing countries and in many other countries, that is going into reverse. That is important, because many of the welfare state policies of the 20th century were built on the premise that the long-term trend was the Lewis model, where eventually everybody would be in standard, protected, regular, full-time, life-time jobs, living in nice nuclear families, with access to cradle-to-grave benefits, etc, etc. That is not happening, and anybody who tells you it is happening is whistling because it is not happening and it is not going to happen.

What you see – and I am going to be brief for obvious reasons – is that the old expectation was that there would be commodification in the early stages of industrialisation, followed by progressive de-commodification, whereby the state and enterprises increasingly paid remuneration in a non-wage form, so that the wage would be a shrinking proportion of total remuneration, while you had more and more state benefits and so on.

That model has also gone into reverse. We are living through a period of re-commodification. This makes assessments of what is happening to income inequality and social inequality very hard to document with standard measures, such as the Gini Coefficient. This is because there can be an increase in money wages that actually hides a decrease in your social income, if you are losing access to state benefits, if you are losing access to enterprise benefits, losing access to community support systems and you are being left more dependent on your individual wage. So, money wages may go up and real poverty may go up as well. That is an important aspect of our debate.

The related outcome, obviously, is inequality. Inequality has changed character in the last twenty-five years, which we need to understand in order to assess the options for social policy. We are seeing not a dualistic development of inequality, the rich versus the poor, but a withering of the core working class, which was the model for redistribution in the 20th century. The core working class is shrinking and it was that core that legitimised the welfare state. It served to give political support for social democracy, social democratic parties and their types. But the core is withering, both in numerical terms and in strength. It will not come back.

Meanwhile, elites at the top are detached from their national societies and are becoming global citizens, a global elite, with bank accounts and properties in numerous places. They are detached from national systems. But curiously a huge number of people at the bottom are also detached; they do not see themselves getting on to a redistributive model. So the inequality has taken on a new form, which is threatening the very notion of social solidarity. The thing that many of us were brought to see as the essence of social policy was social solidarity. If we talk about that now it is likely to induce a smile from your listener. But the loss of a sense of social solidarity is a huge danger.

So, we have a picture of generalized insecurity. The welfare state models of the post-1945 era that some of us were taught, were presented as so sacrosanct that they were established forever. They were said to constitute a societal bargain. Capital took the risks and the insecurities and in return received more than a proportionate share of the winnings. Labour had a smaller share of the winnings, but did not have to bear the risks. No “golden age”, but it was a rough-and-ready deal.

Now we live in an era when the reverse is the case. Overall, capital does not really lose by its risks; the state will always step in, the IMF will step in, or something else will step in if needed. Meanwhile, labour – working people everywhere – have to bear most of the risks and insecurities.

On top of that, there is something really frightening going on, because it threatens the human spirit. That is, more and more people everywhere – including the potential winners in society, the middle classes – are suffering from incredible time pressure, indulging in frenzied activities and frenzied consumerism. You probably know the famous expression, “I shop, therefore I am”. This frenzied pressure – you never have
enough time – is pervasive. A way I think of it is that we are the first generation with MBSEs – which is not an MA or PhD but “Must-Be-Somewhere-Else” syndrome. We are always under pressure, which is threatening the capacity to be decent, to be humane, to be participating in a good society, because to be under constant time pressure threatens our very sense of “community” and the “reciprocity” that people talk about so much.

We are also suffering not just from the Washington Dictat but the entrails (I suppose one could call it that) of “third-wayism” and “compassionate conservatism”. These are the social democrat version and the right-wing, “neo-con” versions of policies that stemmed from a recognition in the 1990s that the Washington Dictat had thrown up intolerable insecurities. Essentially, the key point of third-wayism is that its advocates want to “socially integrate” everybody, and they are going to do it. “We are going to socially integrate you through workfare, through tax credits, through whatever”. But note the paternalistic thread that goes through their moralistic set of policies, which we may discuss later.

The compassionate conservatives saw a similar set of failings, but the fundamental difference between them and the third wayists is that they have given a smaller role to the state, preferring to rely on private and religious initiatives. Both groups give civil society a major place, returning to the 18th century concept, that is as part of the state, rather than the subversive idea associated with Gramsci. Now civil society has been put back as benign, to take over the state’s job.

Civil society is expected to do many of the functions of social policy. But for the compassionate conservatives, the state can stay out of it. It is left to faith-based organizations and other favoured philanthropical groups, such as the Bill Gates Foundation and numerous others. The standard discourse is, “We will deal with this thing, some other foundation will deal with that thing”. Increasingly, you have a stealthy privatisation of social policy.

In this scenario, there is no strengthening of rights. It is patronizing, it is paternalistic at best. It is directive and coercive at worst. It does not conform to those normative principles that I mentioned at the beginning and makes so pretence to do so. It certainly does not address the structural inequalities that we see around us, and it certainly is not freedom-enhancing. There is no sense in which either third-wayism or the compassionate conservatives are really promoting real freedom.

Now, for those of us who are promoting basic income, we see the world like that, and then we have to face a barrage of people around the world, hearing the same arguments again and again, why we cannot and should not move in that direction. It is attendant on us to pre-empt the criticisms levelled at a basic income which we have been addressing. And it is also necessary to look at the alternatives to a basic income.

You will be very pleased at this point that I am not going to go through all of them or discuss all the advantages and the disadvantages… But it is important to think of the various mainstream options, which I will just list. We have dealt with them in detail elsewhere.

In developing countries, there is a lot of emphasis on vouchers, food vouchers and education vouchers, and every other voucher that you can think of…very paternalistic, very wasteful and so on… I will not go into that.

A second policy that is often promoted to give basic security is a minimum wage. This has had its day I am afraid. In a flexible informal system, a minimum wage is not going to reach most of the parts that it needs to reach. It is good, but do not expect too much from it.
The next policy that a lot of people place faith in – on which I have great difficulty in the International Labour Organization, as you may imagine – is social insurance. The idea is that you make contributions and in return you get benefits; therefore, a system that works on social insurance should be a functioning form of social protection. Unfortunately, the conditions for a functioning social insurance have long ceased to exist. It is dependent on full employment, it is dependent on regular contributions from regular employment, and it has been distorted by successive generations of policy makers.

I have never met a minister of labour or a minister of social affairs who has not wanted to change the insurance system in some way, and in every way they have introduced new conditions for entitlement and new ways of disentitling people from benefits. Those ministers act a bit like Charlie Chaplin in that famous scene in “Modern Times”, where he goes around with a spanner, in a trance, attempting to tighten the buttons on a woman’s dress. They always want to tighten the conditions. It is an almost instinctive thing they suffer from. The only hope is that they can be pushed off into early retirement, but they all do it. So, the system of social insurance has long ceased to be an honest system of any type.

The next policy option – and it is mentioned in your documents, so I would like to say a few words about it – is social assistance, which is means-tested social assistance. What we have seen in recent years is an almost global drift towards greater alliance on means testing. And ironically, the countries that have seen the greatest proportional increase in dependence on social assistance are the most developed – so-called most developed – welfare states. They, quietly, have ceased to be what they still purport to be and which many in the literature still regard them as being. They are scarcely universalistic, citizenship-based. Means-testing has grown enormously in Sweden, for example, enormously in France, enormously in Germany.

What do we know about means testing social assistance? Well, it is pretty obvious. Most of you who have studied it will know – low take-up… With most schemes 20 percent, 30 percent of potential eligible people actually receive them. And ironically, as we have found in our surveys around the world, the probability of actually receiving a means-tested benefit is often higher for the less poor than it is for the more poor. So within the lower-income groups in society, it is actually regressive. It is stigmatising. Means testing and form filling are stigmatising. Means-testing is administratively costly. It inevitably leads to those famous ministers twisting the buttons of conditionality. They want to check to see if you have some man’s slippers underneath your bed. Because if you have, that proves that you have a man supporting you, etc., etc. This is madness as social policy… Intrusive, checking up on you… And again the people who tend to get through system to obtain the benefits are those who can play the system better! And they are not the most poor in society. So we should stop kidding ourselves about targeting and reaching the very poor through means testing social assistance.

I was asked about this at a big conference in Montreal, by a social worker having to deal with hundreds of people desperate for help. She stood up in the audience and said, “What would you advise me to say to my clients, when they come and they can’t get the benefits?” So I said, “Look, if I may take my hat off and say I’m not from the ILO, I would say, “Tell them “Lie!”” because that is what you need to do. If you are honest and you are poor, I am afraid you’re in trouble.” Means testing needs to be subject to withering satire and sarcasm. It leads to a proliferation of what I call immoral hazards.

The next policy option is categorical benefits. In other words, choose women with children, the disabled, some group that you find particularly deserving in society for benefits. Now you say to yourself each time you hear of a categorical benefit, “Oh, well I’m sorry but I believe in women with children, I believe that we should support the disabled. But why those groups and not other groups? And why stop there?” And you immediately get into all sorts of hypocrisies. Categorical benefits tend to be unfair, even if they are always needed as part of the set of policies.
The next option to consider is wage subsidies. Wage subsidies and employment subsidies are very popular at the moment. I recently wrote an article attacking such subsidies in the Financial Times. It is extraordinary that the head of the U.S. Employers Organization took the trouble to write a vicious letter attacking me. I got into trouble, needless to say, but I was flattered. Why would he take the trouble to attack me in the most vicious terms, saying I was anti-worker, which anybody who knows me, knows is not the case? But, of course, the beneficiaries of wage subsidies and employment subsidies, the primary beneficiaries, are employers. It enables them to pay lower wages; it enables them to be more inefficient, etc. It is distortionary in the market because often the subsidy is given to firms that are creating new jobs relative to firms that have already created them. That is giving the new boys an advantage over the people who have been doing well for a long time. That is hardly fair. All sorts of inefficiencies and inequities are opened up by subsidies.

The next policy that is pushed very strongly is workfare, and public works goes along with it. Bluntly and briefly, these usually involve many mock jobs, and they are paternalistic and very, very wasteful. Often they lead to little or nothing in output except cynicism by those subject to what has to be done. Huge substitution effects, deadweight effects, all other negative effects… I will not go into all that. We have a literature if you are interested.

Now, finally, we come to a basic income. First of all, I want to say that none of us who favour moving towards a basic income see it as a panacea. None of us say, “You know, if you gave everyone a basic income, all your problems would go away.” We don’t say that but often people claim we do. We don’t! What we do say is that it would give a floor, a social floor, a base on which you can build other institutions and social policies that can make an overall system. Now, I briefly want to list the objections. The first objection, surprise surprise, is cost. And in developing country like South Africa, the argument used by the minister of finance in private is that “If you had a basic income, it would affect foreign confidence and those foreign investors would run them up”. We can answer that in various ways, but at the end when he still hasn’t answered your objections to his argument, he still would hold to the argument because it’s a convenience. But just remember that a country such as South Africa or in many other countries, where there are millions of very poor, is suffering from social violence, is suffering from social tension, social illnesses to do with poverty, and all that actually has a much greater deterrent effect on foreign investment than the idea of giving everybody 100, 150 rands a month… Please…

When you go to country with the worst income distribution in the world, you think you couldn’t redistribute just a little to enable the poor to have a better sense of living? But also of course, when they say “it costs”, don’t forget, there are all those subsidies, there are all those other things that they’ve given out to the rich and the middle classes. So please… It is about priorities; it’s not about cost.

A second objection is it would be inflationary. Giving everybody a basic income might be inflationary! So they say. Well again, you can point out that it would be a substitute for other things. So you are talking about a small net increase, perhaps, depending on the cost and the type of system you have in operation. But there is also a very important point, which is that by giving a basic income, you help twist social spending and consumer spending towards locally produced wage goods rather than imported goods, because of the nature of pattern of consumption of goods and services. So, it would have a Keynesian effect on employment generation and also a positive effect on production. There is no reason to presume that it would be inflationary.

A third objection – and this is a really wicked one put forward by some political scientists and other sophisticates – is that it would undermine that “reciprocity principle”. You have to be impressed by that,
because it sounds good. “It undermines the reciprocity principle!” Students can go back and say “Oh! I mustn’t undermine the reciprocity principle!”

The reciprocity principle is that anybody who has a claim to anything in society must actually do something for it to deserve it. On this, you should re-read Bertrand Russell’s beautiful essay on leisure, because he had some withering comments there about this particular principle. It wasn’t called that; they had less grand terms in those days. Of course, the reciprocity principle is never applied to the idle rich. They have their wealth, and their incomes, and their vast fortunes, etc, etc. They are never obliged to do something in return for that wealth. “Yes, but never mind…” It is completely hypocritical.

There is a second, important point about the reciprocity principle. Underneath it, when you look at it, it is essentially saying, “Only if you perform labour, do you become a deserving person”. That is the essence of the message. If you take a job, then it is OK. Now, why is it that only paid labour should be subject to the reciprocity principle? What about all the care work that women and some men do in society? What about the voluntary work, the community work? Oh, that does not count, unless you have some very sophisticated system. Someone like Tony Atkinson (a supporter of basic income, by the way) would put in community work, but care work is left out. Why go for just labour?

The reciprocity principle is also thoroughly paternalistic. Who is going to determine whether you or I have done what is required to earn the reciprocity? What criteria are you going to use and to whom should I provide my duties in order to earn the benefits? It is a malicious figment of social control.

The next argument against a basic income is it has a disincentive to work. I have always regarded this as an insulting argument, which implies that the human being is lazy, lacking in motivation, and lacking in desire to improve himself, herself, her family, the community and so on… Moreover, a basic income is a low amount, would give basic security so you can make more rational choices. But 99 percent of people are not going to be satisfied with a basic security. They want to do better. But it would also give us a greater sense of control over our time, so that we can make allocations across our life more productively and more contemplatively, and be more balanced in the way we conduct our lives, and therefore, can actually have a long term incentive to being a working citizen.

Another argument put forward, which we have dealt with in various documents, is that a basic income would lower wages, because employers somehow would be able to pay workers less. My argument against that is that, on the contrary, if a person has a basic income guaranteed, they can bargain more, they can resist an exploitive middleman in a slum who comes along and says “I’m going to give you five rupees instead of ten”. It gives them just a little more strength to say “Drop dead!” And I think that is a very important part of bargaining.

Another argument used against a basic income is that it would somehow reduce the pressure on governments to create jobs. I am actually inclined to think that would be a rather good thing if that were the case, because I do not think that creating false jobs and mock jobs and short-term jobs is the great nirvana that some people pretend it is, but we’ll leave that aside.

A final argument against a basic income is that the level would be indeterminate and therefore would be subject to political capture. Certain governments would just before elections raise it, and get elected and then lower it after that. Now, come on! There are easy ways to avoid that. You could have quasi-independent agency to set the level, just as you have monetary policy set by central banks that are independent. You could divorce the process from particular government policies. There are ways of dealing with that. You could link a basic income to changes in GNP. There are formulas that you could work out. It should not be an insurmountable objection.
What, then, are the primary advantages of a basic income?

First, a basic income addresses the problem every social policy person in the world claims he or she believes in solving. They all say, “Our objective is to eradicate poverty. Our objective is to cut poverty!” Well, OK. Let’s start by giving some people some money. That might help.

We also have the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and one of its articles says that all states are committed to giving a basic income. A constitutional right, its worded slightly strangely, but essentially legitimises a move towards a basic income.

We have been conducting surveys around the world and have asked people, ordinary people, about their principles of social justice. It is very interesting. We pose alternative principles, and ask respondents which of those principles do they support. Other research has supported what we have found. Psychiatrists and psychologists in the United States, Canada and Poland have done some psychological experiments asking similar questions. It is remarkable fact that vast majorities of people around the world support a basic income. They believe there should be a minimum floor of income below which people should not have to fall. Even in poor societies, they believe that it should be done and they also are clever enough to realize that it could be done, because they see all those expenditures on other things. It obviously could be afforded.

Another big advantage is that it would enhance real freedom. This was really why Thomas Paine supported the individual right to a basic income. It is a republican right, a claim right. That is what we are talking about. Very critically, a basic income, as part of social policy, could enable more people to have more control over their time. Time is a vital asset, which is a key asset for re-distribution in the modern world. A basic income would help in redistributing that asset.

Another advantage of a basic income is that it would erode poverty traps and unemployment traps that have arisen with social assistance and some forms of social insurance. It would encourage labour market flexibility on more secure terms. It would encourage firms to make jobs more attractive because they would have to attract workers rather than force them into those jobs to a greater extent, particularly at the bottom end. It would have positive macro-economic properties, as mentioned earlier. And it would be an administratively simple way of constructing the base of a general social protection system. And it would be – as you will not be surprised to hear me say – help to reduce state paternalism in all its various forms.

In sum, the arguments in favour of moving towards a basic income are surely powerful; the objections can be answered.

Many of you will be admirers, as I am, of Albert Hirshmann. He wrote a wonderful little book about the public reception to new ideas. In that book he said that historically, every time a new idea comes out, it is greeted by three reactions. The first is the claim of futility: “It will not work! It will not work! It will not work!” The second is the claim of jeopardy: “Ah yes! But if you introduce this, then you will endanger that”. The third is the claim of perversity, “The unintended consequences of what you’re proposing would actually undermine the benefits that you get.” He goes through a number of historical cases where those arguments were used to oppose a reform that now is taken for granted as correct.

I think basic income will have this history. We often think, those of us in BIEN – and I urge you to join us because we need members in Turkey as everywhere – that it may come in a form that we do not anticipate, it may come with a name that we do not anticipate. In a sense, it is coming with the emergence of tax credits and the way those credits are evolving. Some are evolving in bad ways, but many are creating a sense of integration of fiscal and social protection policy, which is an essential aspect of a basic income.
Now, I would like to end by recalling a beautiful saying by a labour economist in Britain, **Barbara Wootton**, if I remember the words correctly, she said:

“It is from the champions of the impossible, rather than the slaves of the possible, that evolution draws its creative force.”

Progress comes not from the ideas of those who focus on the possible, but progress comes – and human evolution comes – from those who dream of doing what people say is impossible.

That is the essence of what we are arguing: Basic income is possible and we should have it.

Thank you very much.