

Responses in Full by Contributors: Part One

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Dated: February 4, 2008

Ejembi John Onah, Founder/President/CEO Focus Nanotechnology Africa Inc (FONAI), USA

Any sustainable development must include innovative science and technology policy as a pillar to socio-political and environmental factors. Firstly, I appreciate the concerted effort to bring sustainable development especially to Africa and the Caribbean. Economic growth, social development and environmental protection are important ingredients for sustainable development but to concentrate on these three aspects as if they bring true sustainable development without an innovative scientific policy has been the greatest mistake or barrier, policy makers have been making and continue to make in what I call 'misplaced priority'. Socio-political and environmental factors cannot and will never bring about sustainable development without an articulate scientific policy integrated. Let me give an example: If you want to set-up an industry that produces adhesives. The first thing that needs to be done is the discovery of how adhesive is produced, secondly to patent the discovery, thirdly seek for funding and recruit people to produce the adhesive and market it without flaws. Sustainable development that addresses social, economic and environmental issues without looking at scientific and technological education as a pillar is like somebody trying to build an industry without any patent or discovery. The house will fall because the foundation to hold it together is not there. Any barrier for sustainable development that addresses effect rather than the cause will not succeed and if it will succeed it will be tentative or cosmetic. It is time for policy makers to get serious and set their priorities right. Policies towards developing nations have in many circumstances been founded on wrong ideas e.g. the millennium development goal is a complete shame; they address the effect rather than the cause. The first MDG should be 'combating science and technological poverty and secondly combating 'brain drain'. Hunger, poverty, HIV/AIDS, etc as part of MDG come as a result of lack of a good science and technological environment to bring about economic growth through discovery and industrialization. You cannot integrate a faulty policy or an incorrect priority. Before we integrate, we must understand and correctly understand sustainable development. Sustainable development should be pivoted on science and technology not on socio-political and environmental factors. Such science and technology environment should have the following objectives:

- Support institutional structures so they foster and nurture development;
- Support long-term science and engineering research leading to fundamental discoveries in medicine, energy and environment, agriculture and food supply, home security, sciences, materials and engineering.
- Encourage inter-disciplinary, multidisciplinary, multi-institutional and multi-national cooperation
- Provide a platform for new paradigm of education for training the experts in science and entrepreneurs of the future;
- Create the physical infrastructure to enable first-class basic research, exploration application, development of new industries, and rapid commercialization of innovations

Therefore the priority now should be scientific and technological innovation. When any sustainable development is pivoted on these three pillars with the above objective then we can get serious. These essential ingredients are now found in nanotechnology (the manipulation of matter at atomic and molecular scale), which is considered as the greatest scientific and technological revolution ever encouraging. There is no meaningful sustainable development without the engine of science and technology. Let us get this right before we go into barriers of integration; this is a

major problem; incorrect priority, emphasis on the result rather on the cause of the result, cures rather than prevention. Why is nanotechnology important? It is a cheap technology that has high impact to bring about sustainable development by combating poverty, diseases, brain drain, etc with a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional and multi-national approaches. It encourages collaboration across disciplines, institutions and nations for a better understanding of the problem to give correct prescription.

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Glenn Okun, Clinical Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship and Adjunct Professor of Finance NYU

The three goals that have been articulated may be difficult to achieve simultaneously for nations attempting to support industrial formation for those sectors in an early stage of development. These actors are seeking to avoid the high cost of doing business in the developed world through their international expansion efforts.

An early competitive advantage is often cost-based. Regulatory requirements, especially environmental laws, may impose significant expenses that reduce proforma investment returns to capital providers and multinationals that nations often seek as participants in development efforts. Risk capital investors, financiers and industrial partners, will be willing to accept some internal, foreign nation's development risk in exchange for a low cost, high flexibility working environment.

Environmental protection efforts may need to be staged at a later time in the nation's development in order to accentuate a country's attractiveness during its early industrial development.

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We cannot have a substantive discussion about sustainable development without keeping a primary focus on agriculture. It is the way that humans have our most frequent and largest direct impacts on the rest of nature; and the way that non-producing humans have our most frequent and greatest impacts on producers.

The current global landscape of agriculture--- the distribution and size of landholdings; the patterns of crop choice, inputs and their impacts---is the result of farmer decisions which have for generations (between 50 and 200 years, depending on the region) been profoundly shaped by the decisions of non-farmers.

If we would like to move development in more benign social and environmental directions, we need to have a very clear focus on how these non-farmer decisions—of governments, researchers, multilateral donors, NGO, corporations and citizen-consumers—have shaped the incentive structure of farmers, and through them, farmer decisions, and their social and environmental impacts. What is needed, and this is clearly expressed in the International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) is a fundamental shift in the incentive structure for farmers around the world.

What kind of agriculture is the best? What kind of agriculture provides the greatest benefits to humans in the present, while transmitting the greatest productive resource base to the next generation, and allowing the greatest biodiversity along the way?

The possibility that we are long overdue in considering is that the best agriculture is one based on significantly higher labor inputs per area than in the farming that has come to dominate most of the globe; and significantly more diverse production streams than in currently dominant farming.

I suggest that a “main barrier to for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development” are two powerful assumptions about agricultural change that have dominated development discussion and practice at least since WWII. Each of these assumptions needs to be challenged:

- 1) that the increasing substitution of purchased inputs for labor is either necessary, desirable or inevitable.
- 2) that the increasing specialization of farmers in a small number of products for global markets is either necessary, desirable or inevitable.

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Chamari Karunanayake, HR Assistant, Staffing Services, United Nations

Dear All,

I think one of the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development (i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection) is having discussions at high level meetings but lack of direct and clear communication with the people directly involved or with the people who can contribute directly.

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Dated: February 5, 2008

Iyad Abumoghli, SURF-UNDP, Lebanon

Dear All

Responding to the question on what are the main barriers for integrating sustainable development in development strategies, I would like to highlight the following issues:

1- Surge of oil prices: For many countries, whether oil producing or oil consuming, this has led to tremendous impact on development priorities. For oil producing countries, additional financial resources have led to rapid urban development at the expense of the environment, rural areas and the unprivileged. Examples of building high rising buildings, creation of man-made islands and greening the deserts with invasive species are numerous in the Arabian Gulf area. On the other hand, oil consuming countries have to pay the price of the oil surge by changing priorities and inviting investment projects from oil producing countries while easing environmental standards and requirements. Again, examples of building hotels and resorts on coastal and forest areas are numerous in the Middle East.

2- Conflicts and Wars and Natural Disasters: Unfortunately, fighting a fire in one place seems to ignite another one in a different place. Globally, the numbers of conflicts have not been reduced for the past decades. Conflicts and wars, as well as earthquakes and floods, again, change countries priorities from seeking sustainable development into crisis management and social welfare.

3- High Expectations, little action: Numerous global conferences and meetings have been held to promote sustainable development and pledge resources to help countries in need. Promises have not materialized into substantial aid assistance, however, many experiences have been shared, but that is not enough. When Sustainable Development was high on the national agenda, countries organized meetings, campaigns and workshops because funding was provided by a project or a programme. Sustainability of interventions has been compromised as usually the Ministry of Environment is the one assigned the SD agenda and as such always received little attention and the lowest budget.

4- MDGs vs. SD: In 2000, when the Millennium Declaration was issued and the MDGs were developed as global indicators, this was not seen as a tool towards enhancing sustainable development, but rather another reporting mechanism requested by the UN with some projects to be implemented here and there. Achieving the MDGs, or lack thereof, face similar obstacles to integrating sustainable development into planning. Again, countries see these campaigns for integrating zillion of things as daunting tasks not coming in an integrated manner, but for different purposes at different times. What might have contributed to lowering the importance of sustainable development, is that it was given an indicator along with 24 other indicators and was not actually integrated as a cross cutting issue in all of the MDGs.

5- ECOSOC vs. UN Sustainable Development Council: Since 1992, the UN has failed to establish its own Sustainable Development Council to replace to Social and Economic Council. With all the development agencies, experiences and expertise at the UN, we are still waiting for that courageous decision. If we, the UN family, need all that time, then what can be expected of poor developing countries waiting for some funds and projects to help them do that?

I will leave what can be done to another posting

Best wishes
Iyad

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Eric Belvaux, Programme Officer, Biodiversity for Development Unit, Montreal, Canada

Dear Colleagues,

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity would like to share with you some inputs that could be useful in launching this e-Discussion.

Conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of its components are probably two of the most important elements of environmental protection, one of the three pillars of sustainable development.

For your information, Article 6 of the Convention states that each Contracting Party shall, in accordance with its particular conditions and capabilities (i) develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes and (ii) integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.

The following comments come from a note of the CBD executive secretary entitled “Synthesis and analysis of obstacles to implementation of national biodiversity strategies and action plans” <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/wgri/wgri-02/official/wgri-02-02-add1-en.doc> .

In their third national report, Parties were asked to indicate the relative importance of various obstacles [1]/ to implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the thematic programmes of work, by ranking them as “high-level”, “medium-level”, or “low-level” challenges.

1) Taking all reporting Parties together, the following ten challenges were ranked as “high” or “medium-level” by more than 70% of Parties for the implementation of Article 6:

- Lack of financial, human, technical resources (84%);
 - Lack of economic incentive measures (82%);
 - Loss of biodiversity and the corresponding goods and services it provides not properly understood and documented (76%);
 - Lack of public education and awareness at all levels (75%);
 - Lack of effective partnerships (74%);
 - Lack of horizontal cooperation among stakeholders (73%);
 - Unsustainable production and consumption patterns (72%);
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- Lack of mainstreaming and integration of biodiversity issues into other sectors (71%);
 - Inadequate capacity to act, caused by institutional weakness (70%);
 - Lack of knowledge and practice of ecosystem-based approaches to management (70%).
2. These may be considered as significant challenges by most groups of countries. Four of these challenges, and two others, were ranked as high-level challenges by a significant number of Parties overall:
- Lack of mainstreaming and integration of biodiversity issues into other sectors (about 31%);
 - Lack of financial, human and technical resources (39%);
 - Lack of economic incentive measures (about 40%);
 - Unsustainable consumption and production patterns (33%)
 - Poverty (35%);
 - Weak law enforcement (35%).

In addition to the list of high or medium challenges for all countries, more than 70% of the developing countries, as a group, identified “lack of benefit sharing” and “lack of capacities of local communities”. Within this group, the least developed countries further identified “lack of adequate scientific research capacities”, “lack of transfer of technology and expertise”, and “lack of synergies at national and international levels”. Small island developing States highlighted “loss of traditional knowledge”, “existing scientific and traditional knowledge not fully utilized”, “lack of appropriate policies and laws” and “weak law enforcement capacity”, while the remaining developing countries highlighted “lack of precautionary and proactive measures” in addition to the general list. Among countries with economies in transition, the following additional challenges were ranked as high or medium by 70% or more in addition to the general list: “Lack of precautionary and proactive measures”, “Limited public participation and stakeholder involvement” and “Lack of political support and will”. Among developed countries, the only challenges to be ranked as high or medium by more than 70% were: “Lack of public education and awareness at all levels” and “Lack of financial, human and technical resources”.

Kind regards,

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Bremley W. B. Lyngdoh, Founder and CEO, Worldview Impact, England

Indeed the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), along with the Millennium Summit (New York, 2000) have set the framework for national and sub-national governments to work towards sustainable development. Having participated in all these three United Nations global conferences, I would agree that the progress towards the implementation of

Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation (JPOI) and the MDG 7 environmental sustainability targets is mixed.

The most difficult challenge that governments face today is that global warming has become an inconvenient truth. Even before the heads of states met in Rio during UNCED, dramatic changes were already in progress that will impact us all living on this planet. The challenge now is to reduce emissions of climate gases by at least 50% of 1990 level by 2050, as recommended by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its latest report of May 2007. The aim is to contain increases in global temperature of less than 2 degrees Celsius. The United Nations Conference on Climate Change in Bali in December 2007 did not meet the expected results, as further negotiations will be needed for a possible agreement in Copenhagen in 2009.

To address these challenges I think there is a need for the creation of Social Enterprises that will work in partnership with governments and the international community on mitigating climate change by creating sustainable livelihoods for the poor while reducing poverty to improve living conditions in the developing world. There needs to be more investment in green business opportunities at the community level in the developing countries to create an enabling environment for local people to actively participate in an array of climate change mitigation projects such as carbon off setting through planting rubber trees and other relevant activities, complimented by renewable energy technologies to support organic agriculture, fisheries and forestry on a sustainable level.

The governments should facilitate solutions by assisting these Social Enterprises in planting fast growing trees to neutralize emissions as a means to reduce climate changes. These initiatives will create value for communities with development potentials, in support of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. This historic challenge in global poverty reduction of 50% by 2015 is to bring 600 million people out of abject poverty by increasing their earnings of more than one dollar per day. There is an urgent need for a new approach in meeting the environmental, social and economic targets. It is possible to contribute to the three targets by establishing community forests for the benefit of environment and marginalized communities in the developing world. The triple bottom line approach will be achieved by protecting the environment and biodiversity through the mitigation of climate change, supporting local economic growth through the creation of sustainable livelihoods for the poor and finally, supporting social development through poverty reduction initiatives.

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Bakhodir Ganiev, UNDP Tashkent

As past experience shows (the number of poor countries has not been decreasing over the last 50 years, and such development success as in case of East Asian Tigers + China is still rather an exception), getting out of poverty trap for poor countries is extremely difficult. In order to accomplish that, along with other important ingredients such as clear vision and strong political will, efficient as well as focused management of scarce natural, human and financial resources is a must. This does not allow LDCs to address all three mentioned dimensions of development –

economic, social and environmental – as equally important, as they have to draw resources from the same pool. Therefore developing nations can adequately address only few acute environmental issues and attention should be on those that either affect their economic growth or lead to immediate environmental or humanitarian crisis (e.g. efficient use of scarce water resources, preventing soil salinization and desertification). The role of the UN and other key international players in this case is to help identify and bring such issues under attention of developing nation governments. Bringing developing nations to environmental standards of the developed world may result in spreading their scarce resources over resolution of numerous issues, leading to very little or no progress at all.

Unfortunately, few developing countries have focused national development strategies, with clearly set and prioritized objectives and realistic action plans. Most have some sort of strategies or detail plans of action on the agency (ministry) level only that lack coordination and in extreme cases may even include contradicting objectives (e.g. poverty reduction through pro-poor growth, but at the same time development of capital-intensive sectors along with agricultural reforms leading to immediate decrease of employment in agriculture). In that regard PRSP process seems to be one of the available tools, although it has not proven itself as highly effective so far (as some do it mostly on donor requirement and for international visibility purposes).

PRSP process can also foster interagency cooperation between involved government agencies as well as strengthen participatory approach to development planning and provide necessary emphasis on inclusion of crucial environmental issues. However, still lacking higher formal commitment of top national leadership and appropriate capacities of key players must be ensured before initiation of PRSP process, and wider participation across the government agencies (especially on local level) as well as the civil society during it. Moreover, having several strategies (PRSP, country's national economic and social development plans, sectoral programmes/plans that don't stem out of PRSP or national development plan) covering same issues/areas and setting different priorities need to be avoided, as they diminish commitment to each and lead to confusion on development priorities.

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Marianne Fernagut, UNEP/GRID-Arendal, Norway

To ensure sustainable economic growth returning profits to the three P's (people, planet, profit), I firmly believe more effort is needed to support small entrepreneurs conducting projects with a positive environment component. In developing countries, more than 90% of all firms outside the agricultural sector are Small and mediums and micro enterprises (SMEs), generating a significant employment and portion of GDP.

SMEs can play a much bigger role in developing national economies, alleviating poverty, participating in the global economy and better partnering with larger SMEs corporations. They

do, however, need to be promoted. Such support requires commitments by and between governments, business and civil society.

Marianne

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R.J. Onno Gaanderse, Environmental Planner, Ottawa Canada

While I agree that encompassing well-intentioned policies at international and national levels are essential, on their own they achieve nothing. At best they represent a (coordinated) statement of intent, a broad guideline for action, and a photo opportunity for the various officials and leaders. What is required is dedicated support and resources directed to the levels of government that have a direct impact on the development of communities, to implement sustainable programs and initiatives. This would most often be at the local level. Municipalities are responsible for the delivery of social services, property zoning and standards, transportation, economic development and health initiatives. To use an old saying, it's where the rubber meets the road.

Local governments can only deliver those services, determine the regulations and by-laws related to those services, and form partnerships with various agencies and organizations, if they get support from higher levels of government. This support must come in two forms: legislation, and appropriate implementation funding. Without that support, there are few local leaders willing to risk scarce local tax-based resources to develop and implement sustainable initiatives that compete for funds with what they consider the basic services they were elected to provide.

That brings up the final point I wish to present for consideration today, the need for the political will to make tough decisions related to sustainable development, at all levels of government.

Right now, we have a preponderance of political leaders unwilling to adopt measures uncomfortable to their constituents and backers. In taking unpopular positions, they risk losing votes, the support of their political parties and rivals, and financial support needed to be re-elected.

So two questions for consideration are:

How do we enable (inter)national declarations to become operational at the local levels; and
How do we motivate and enable our political leaders to make the difficult decisions to "do the right thing" while risking personal political fallout.

R.J. Onno Gaanderse,
Environmental Planner City of Ottawa Canada

Andrew McEwan, Chairman Facility Management Association of Australia

I agree with the broad themes presented. Being involved in the urban planning field and also the building construction and management field the points raised resonate through the operational application of the principles of sustainable development.

Realising a balanced outcome from an integrated approach to sustainable development presents a challenge as generally there is tension relating to striking the right balance. This is particularly the case where a strong and potentially immovable environmental focus creates difficulties realising a balanced outcome.

For sustainable development and sustainability to be achievable the strategic policy framework and associated operational application needs to both acknowledge the key pillars, but also ensure a balanced approach is taken in application and delivery. Arguably, the current application focuses very much on the environmental pillar potentially at the expense of the economic and social pillars (and also the institutional pillar) - if one pillar is the focus over time, the imbalance will seriously impact on global economic, social and institutional sustainability.

At an urban planning level and facility management level, the current overwhelming focus on the environmental pillar is creating barriers to optimal economic and social outcomes as tensions influence the achievement of a balanced outcome.

The perspectives of the stakeholders contribute to the definition of a "balanced outcome", which also presents barriers to implementation.

At an institutional level, the general approach to assigning responsibility to implementation of sustainable development is allocated to the Environmental Protection Agency or equivalent, which presents a form of conflict of interest in terms of the agency having a core focus on the environment - hence the perspective of "balanced outcome" is brought to question.

For sustainable communities to exist it is imperative that a balanced outcome be realised - with realistic and satisfactory compromises sought to achieve this outcome ensuring the outcome does not seriously compromise the objectives or intent of the individual pillars.

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Adewole Taiwo, CEO Taiwo Adewole and Associates, Nigeria

Dear all,

First and foremost, i would like to thank the organiser of the eDiscussion most especially by giving some of us from developing countries to be part of this forum,
I believe achieving sustainable development in developing countries, needs the involvement of the people at grassroots, a very good example is what is happening in Nigeria, In the Niger Delta region, there is a serious crisis which is due to environmental pollution on their Environment, while the government and the international communities who are looking for solution are not on ground to access the problem and the government are busy coming up with policy here and there without the involvement of the concerned citizen,
I believe the same thing is applying to the issues of achieving Sustainable Development in

Nigeria, There are lot of people with good ideas and resources but our major challenges is always in our Leader, We have bad leadership,

In most cases, there are fantastic policy which when implements will result in achieving the said sustainable development, but where we have bad leader in power, we cannot achieve sustainable development. Another issue that we in developing country like to follow the policy of the developed countries. We are always looking up to them, which is very wrong. There is a saying that "charity begin at home". I believe it is time, we have to start looking in ward most especially in Africa, and we should embark on what is termed "Strength Based Strategies using the Asset Based Community approach.

Thank you.

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Dr J G Ray, Reader & Director of Environment Studies, India

Sustainable economic growth depends on uses of natural resources in such a way that degeneration never exceeds regeneration. Degeneration usually exceeds regeneration in our countries usually due to following reasons:

- (1) Increase in rate of growth of population and the inevitable pressure on increased production and excessive use of resources
- (2) Inefficient control on waste of energy and water resources during the supply due to lack of necessary capital for revisions and poor technology
- (3) Inefficient economic planning – planning without exact field realities so that much of the capital is wasted.
- (4) Lack of political will and corruption in implementation of developmental schemes.
- (5) Failure of Research and Development activities.
- (6) Political pressure groups and their unscientific operations

b) Sustainable social development is difficult in developing countries in general due to:

- (1) Illiteracy and influence of superstitions and social stigmas.
- (2) Criminal – Political nexus operating in the country.
- (3) Religious fundamentalism and operation of religious – political nexus
- (4) Political and Bureaucratic corruption

(c) Environment Protection has challenges due to;

- (1) Poor environmental awareness among politicians and general mass of people.
- (2) Growing irresponsibility among the educated – problems of educational process.
- (3) Increase in consumerist life style – consuming more is generally considered a better standard of life.
- (4) Pollution and deforestation.

National sustainable development strategies can give directions to follow a common pattern and principles of development in all the levels of government – Central to state to local government systems. Poverty reduction strategy papers and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework may concentrate more on assisting the countries in developing and supply of better methodologies of energy transfer so that energy needs may be met from better conservation and not of further pressure on existing resources. Moreover, more investment in improving environmental literacy is important.

UN organizations can support developing countries through:

- (1) Transfer of expertise through collaborative research programmes, workshops and seminars in developing nations.
- (2) Giving more exposure of people working in R & D of developing countries to the activities of successful organizations and countries.
- (3) Providing direct assistance for environment education and technology development through NGOs and Academic institutions and never through government agencies.

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Mary Ennis, Executive Director, Disabled Peoples' International (DPI), Canada

Any discussion on integrating the objectives of sustainable development must be inclusive of the people and communities that are impacted, just as sustainable development itself must be inclusive of everyone. Women, indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, youth, seniors, and so forth have a wealth of knowledge, expertise and ideas to share. Without their input, and support sustainable development is a goal without a foundation upon which to build. Their contributions must be sought appropriately and carefully considered. More basically, no number of instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks can be effective unless they, too, have strong roots among the people and communities that are impacted.

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Dated: February 6, 2008

Steve Bass, Senior Fellow, IIED

Dear Tariq, Hans, Linda and colleagues

Thanks for kicking off this valuable discussion. I have noted a number of paradoxes that constrain sustainable development initiatives from progressing beyond mere talk:

To begin with, three key UN-commissioned reports that demonstrate unsustainable development were not examined together – in spite of UN initiatives having been central to many of the ‘SD agreements’. The Millennium Project confirmed that progress in reducing poverty is too slow. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment concluded that most ecosystems are being critically degraded. And the IPCC clearly demonstrated how unsustainable development paths are leading to climatic instability. But these have not been integrated in any meaningful way. This is itself a sign that a sustainable-development approach is not being pursued globally.

And we can identify further paradoxes that constrain sustainable development:

- a) The ‘economic growth first’ paradigm that has caused poverty and environmental problems to persist is the very thing that we continue to rely on to solve those same problems.
- b) This unsatisfactory state of affairs can co-exist in spite of a policy climate that espouses sustainable development, from the UN level down to municipalities. Action towards sustainable development is being neglected just when it is most urgently needed: sustainable development remains at best a ‘virtual’ world, a planners’ dream.
- c) Many traditions of e.g. community management, which could support sustainable development, have been ignored in the global technocratic endeavour to assemble a sustainable development ‘toolkit’, and are being dismantled by many governments just when they are most needed.
- d) Although they acknowledge that the ‘big SD idea’ makes sense, institutions are resistant to big ideas, producing aggressive sophistry to protect privileged ways of life, e.g. carbon offsets, rather than system-wide change that transforms everyone’s way of life e.g. reducing fossil fuel intensities.
- e) It is all too easy to adopt the ‘revolutionary’ language of sustainable development but escape accountability for transformative action. If pushed, it is not very difficult for any government, company or individual to define what they are doing as ‘sustainable’, selecting the boundaries of analysis (global or local, short or long term) so as to avoid the need to make any difficult trade-offs.

Thus what was once seen as revolutionary in its words – ‘sustainable development’ – is now just as likely to be seen as regressive in its actions. The basic constraints to sustainable development remain:

- Dominant economic growth models are considered inviolable, rather than people's rights and welfare, or environmental processes and limits
- Environmental benefits and costs are externalised
- Poor people are marginalised, and inequities entrenched
- Governance regimes are not designed to internalise environmental factors, to iron out social inequities, or to develop better economic models
- The machinery of government remains directed at 20th century problems, unable to cope with globalisation, climate change, urbanisation, pandemics, migration...
- And there is little effective challenge to unsustainable behaviour

So where should we focus our energies now? Looked at globally and over 20 years, sustainable development endeavours to date are characterised by top-down commitments, plans and tools.

The number of commitments, and of engaged countries and companies, is perhaps more impressive than the depth of each commitment or consequent changes observed. Further refining and streamlining the toolkit is needed, but so is more vigour, pace, and scale in applying it. Efforts over the next 20 years should now be directed at the entrenched structural problems that distort both developmental and environmental prospects – focusing on key injustices, notably in trade, and environmental tipping points, notably climate change. Stakeholders will need to be bold enough to shift the emphasis of their work:

1. From promoting concepts and ideals to embracing what works for sustainable development in a ‘second-best world’
2. From influencing policy-makers to mobilising publics
3. From emphasising plans to ‘rewiring’ institutions and unleashing existing capacities
4. From privileging economic growth goals to social justice and environmental thresholds
5. From creating easy wins and niches to making hard choices that change underlying causes in trade, rights, etc
6. From isolated environmental policy change in the name of sustainable development, to greater policy coherence
7. From an ‘internationally imposed’ agenda to a ‘globally constructed’ endeavour shared by many
8. From a ‘professionalised’, technocratic approach to SD to one which draws on many traditions and innovations
9. And in further directions which I hope this e-discussion will help to reveal

Best wishes

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Dr D.B.Dalal-Clayton, Senior Fellow and Director for Strategies, Planning and Assessment, IIED

Dear colleagues,

Challenges to achieving integration for sustainable development

Where is the real political will?

Since the Brundtland Commission, ‘sustainable developments has become the focus of a global body of effort comprising initiatives and actions at international, national and local levels as well as a wide array of other activity including research, capacity-building, communication and advocacy and the involvement of governments, the private sector, academia, civil society organisations and others. It is now the subject of a massive literature and is promoted through the many organs of the media. It has been addressed at a variety UN events and conferences including the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

As a result, the language of sustainable development (the stock buzzwords and catch phrases) has been readily taken up and can be found everywhere in the speeches of politicians and senior

decision-makers and in policy and strategy documents. But the evidence indicates that either they do not understand what sustainable development really means and what needs to be done to put it into effect, or that they are unwilling or unable to show real leadership and make the hard choices or take the difficult decisions that are necessary. There appears to be a persistent lack of genuine political and institutional will to address the challenges of sustainable development. Inevitably trade-offs will have to be made and undoubtedly there will be winners and losers. Another major problem is that our sectoral systems of governance (at all levels) create and perpetuate silo thinking and behaviour (fueled by the dynamics of power and influence).

The extent of genuine progress towards sustainable development remains extremely limited. Yes, we can point to many individual examples of successfully implementing its aims and ideas. But these remain as mere islands in the broader oceans of development in which all the major environmental and social indicators and trends continue to deteriorate alarmingly – as illustrated graphically by the latest Global Environment Outlook report (GEO4) by UNEP. Put simply, things are getting worse, not better.

Sustainable development is no longer on the political agenda. The big issue is now climate change - indeed it is a real and major threat and is constantly in the media – and it lies very high on the political agenda. And it can be reasonably argued that there has been a significant convergence of political will – internationally, nationally and more locally – to address this issue. But whilst climate change is a key issue that threatens the planet and our future, it is but one aspect of the much broader agenda of ensuring sustainable development. And there is a real problem that the singular focus on climate change is leaving the rest of the sustainable agenda ignored, forgotten and orphaned.

What about the wide array of other concerns that are critical to sustainability? For example:

- The pervasive degradation of our environment on which our existence and future depends, eg the unrelenting loss of ecosystems, habitats and biodiversity, over-consumption of non-renewable natural resources, worsening pollution of marine and freshwater and the atmosphere;
- Rising poverty and inequity (the gap between rich and poor is widening);
- Spread of diseases (eg HIV/AIDS, Malaria) and malnutrition;
- Erosion of traditional ways of life;
- The consequences of globalisation,
- and so on - the list of problems is extensive.

All of these and much more need to be addressed in a joined-up and holistic way if they are to be countered and managed.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to refocus attention on sustainable development amongst politicians and senior decision-makers and to try to convey why it is important – in an effort to win their hearts and minds and make the case for effective action.

We have seen our leaders come together to deal with climate change. The G8 has made impressive-sounding commitments to eradicate poverty. But where is the real progress and how does this really link with the rest of the sustainable development agenda? – tackling which is the real route to securing release from poverty

Leaders and decision-makers need to go beyond the easy step of merely signing accords and usurping the language of sustainability. They need to ‘make failed leadership history’ and turn their ‘commitments’ into effective action by putting our future on a sustainable path. We already have a large degree of international consensus on most of the necessary actions - through UN

accords (such as those reached at the WSSD). These must be turned into reality on-the-ground. Furthermore our efforts need to be re-energised And this requires real political commitment and action by leaders in government an the private sector and across society - and at more local levels where daily decisions are taken by communities and citizens that, collectively, have the power to make the difference

We in this e-discussion (I assume) already accept several cornerstone notions about the concept of sustainable development:

- Social, economic and environmental objectives are the three pillars of sustainable development. They should be complementary and interdependent in the development process – leaders (and we) need to understand and accept that..
- So our social, economic and environmental objectives need to be integrated wherever possible, through mutually supportive policies and practices, and trade-offs negotiated where such integration is not achievable.
- Difficult policy changes will be required in many sectors and coherence is required between them.

But we need to convince politicians of these too.

All of our efforts – experimentation with approaches, research, publications, conference and workshop deliberations and agreements and the rest have really helped us all to define the shape and scope of the challenge, and to understand what works and what doesn't, and certainly we can point to some progress. But its has not been enough. Overall things are becoming less, not more, sustainable. We need to try additional approaches to win the hearts and minds of political leaders and to convince them to commit, show genuine leadership and take action to change things and make a difference.

Seeking the tools for the job

The challenge to integrate environment and development has never been more urgent. Infrastructure and agriculture must be climate-proofed. Industry must be energy- and water-efficient. Poor people's environmental deprivations must be tackled in development activity. Their environmental rights must be recognised and supported. Environmental institutions need to work more closely together with other institutions – for too many of which the environment is treated as an externality.

Change will be slow without adequate stakeholder pressure to link institutions and learning from experience of 'what works' for environmental mainstreaming. There has been little sharing of experience on conducting 'environmental mainstreaming' tasks in advocacy, analysis, planning, investment, management, and monitoring. In contrast, there is too much untested guidance on how to go about the tasks.

This is why, in early 2007, following discussions in the Poverty and Environment Partnership (PEP), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) began an initiative to produce a 'User Guide' to Effective Approaches to Environmental Mainstreaming. The initiative is overseen by an international Stakeholders Panel comprising a mix of decision-makers and practitioners in government, business, development assistance and civil society.

Our contention is that environmental mainstreaming capacity will be much stronger if stakeholders are able to select appropriate tools, methods and tactics. Some of these are widely

used and others still in development; some are easy to do and others demanding of skills and money; some are effective but others are not. Too many tools are being 'pushed' by outside interests, and too few locally developed (and more informal, or less expensive) approaches are widely known. There is not enough 'demand-pull' information from potential users. Neither is there enough information available that helps them to select the right approaches themselves – as opposed to taking what others want or suggest/promote.

Therefore this initiative is trying to identify which approaches work best, for what purpose and for which user. This guidance will be based on evidence submitted through a series of regional and country-based stakeholder/user consultations and workshops, and the Panel's own experience.

The focus will be those approaches which directly help to shape policies, plans and decisions; NOT the wider array of secondary approaches applied downstream of decision-making (eg market delivery mechanisms and instruments, field management tools)

To learn more about this initiative and to engage in the process, visit the project website at www.environmental-mainstreaming.org

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Contribution to the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (QMR) 2008 e-Discussion on Achieving Environmental Sustainability

I read with great interest the insightful comments made to date by colleagues from around the world. At this point I would like to step back for a moment and ask the following questions. What are we talking about? What does sustainable development mean? These questions directly relate to the first objective of the 2008 Annual Ministerial Review, which is: To explore the key challenges countries face in assuring that the global consensus on sustainable development is embraced at the national level

It is not an understatement to observe that sustainable development is a uniquely ambiguous concept with multiple meanings and multiple applications. It is a concept that was created through a fundamental questioning of how humanity interacts with its environment in a world of limited and unevenly distributed resources, compounded by a rapidly increasing global

population. It raises questions of the fundamental political and social structures that exist today and their negative effect on the natural environment. Debates on how sustainable development should be achieved include, but by no means are limited to; the need to develop new tools and instruments through technological innovation; the development of fiscal and legislative policy in order to regulate humanity's effect on the environment; individual behaviour change through education; as well as various combinations of the aforementioned. These are important and challenging issues which need to be fully addressed at the international, national, regional, local and individual levels.

With the above observations in mind I return to my initial question: What is sustainable development? Contained within this question is one of the most significant barriers to the concepts effective integration into nation policy. The rather unsatisfactory answer is that sustainable development is defined by diverse and conflicting visions. Each country must position its understanding of what sustainable development needs to achieve within its own unique set of, both external and internal pressures. For example, using the three pillars analogy, does a particular nation put more emphasis on the social, environmental, or economic pillars? To what degree is there a combination of these pillars in the national understanding of sustainable development? The first step therefore in creating effective sustainable development policy that is globally cohesive and locally relevant is to identify the primary conflicting visions of how sustainable development perceived. With this achieved a constructive understanding of sustainable development can be gained and effective policy constructed.

As a practical example there is often conflict and confusion over the difference between the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability'. The two terms imply very different principles and definitions. I draw specifically on this very debate entitled 'Achieving Environmental Sustainability'. The overall theme for the 2008 Annual Ministerial Review is: 'Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development. There is then already a conflict of visions as to what this debate is actually discussing. By focusing on environmental sustainability the two pillars of social and economic are already excluded. Sustainable development is unique in the fact that it is a policy goal that has been imposed from above onto the national structure. With the aforementioned observations on understanding diverse national positions in mind a cohesive vision of sustainable development must exist at all levels. Upon this foundation a flexible and reflexive sustainable development policy framework can be built

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Thanks for taking this initiative. My personal comments:

1. Although the three pillars of sustainable development and their integration are generally recognised and accepted, in practice, decision-makers face the issue of short-term vs. long term, which implies certain sequential priorities among the three pillars. Simply proposing that all three pillars be given the same weight is simplistic and unhelpful. What is truly needed is the establishment of scientifically-determined but locally adjusted sustainability thresholds to guide the often implicit weighting exercise. Also needed is a genuine appreciation of sustainable development challenges as well as opportunities for society on the part of the government and citizens. So far these challenges and opportunities have largely been perceived as the "voices" from the sustainable development community. A much larger constituency for sustainable development in each country needs to be cultivated and become active in development strategy making. Talking about opportunity, one emerging possibility is to demonstrate tangible contributions that a sustainable development approach can make to socioeconomic imperatives.

2. Various existing instruments need to be made much more practical as opposed to be driven either by dogmatism/rhetorics or by unquestioned national priorities for fear of undermining national ownership. To be practical means these instruments should lead to solutions to specific sustainable development problems by certain deadlines, problems that are identified both by the country and the external agencies as priorities. This does not mean taking what has been proposed by the countries as they are; it requires substantive and constructive policy advice to be communicated to countries in a sensitive manner. Lack of this, we may be able to achieve full national ownership, but it may go further away from sustainable development. Also, giving critical yet constructive advice should be seen as part of the process that will eventually attain national ownership. Whoever is to give such advice, however, must ensure the quality of their advice. Advice generated from within the countries, not necessarily from the government sector, should be given special consideration and its entry into policy debates should be facilitated.

3. Talking about learning from others, lots of learning activities that are related to aspects of sustainable development exist. But there are two major shortcomings. One is that they tend to focus on particular aspects, such as gender mainstreaming, the human rights approach to development, ecosystem management, or decent work, etc, rather than on the whole picture of sustainable development challenges at the macro level and how to exercise leadership at that level to manage the overall societal progress towards sustainability. The other drawback in many existing learning programmes is the lack of a long-term strategy to cultivate a critical mass of sustainable development leaders for countries, who will be essential for leading the campaign to win the sustainable development battle. An existing institution such as the UN University should have the ambition to take on this challenge of producing a continuous stream of high level leaders as champions for sustainable development.

Again, these are personal views and should not be attributed to my organisation.

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Sustainable Development: An Integrated Force in the Business Environment

A. The Equation

Sustainable Development is in the horizon for corporations, governments and international organizations of countries around the world and it will be facing the challenge of the effects of this external force in its daily business operations and its existence among nations and within its societies. The variables that makes up sustainable development consists of Economic Prosperity , which is the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, Social Equity , which is the social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone and Environmental Sustainability which is the prudent use of natural resources and effective protection of the environment.

B. Countries & Sustainable Development

1. Integrating the goals of Economic & Social Development Growth

a. Role of Government & Social Development

A country's economic system consists of external and internal forces that contribute to the undulation of activity of the organization, consumers and monetary and fiscal policies. A country's economic resource consists of land, labour, capital and human resource-which when developed and put through education and skill training, becomes human capital. Economic Prosperity is the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. The external economic forces are the life cycles, business cycle changes, inflation, interest rats, international economics, consumer sentiments, and technology, government [changes in law, regulation, taxation, and political environment]. The internal forces of countries economic system consists of the industries, the companies and labor force. The level of a country's productivity impacts on its long term growth. Social Equity is the social progress and the recognition of the basic needs of everyone. Sustainable

Development can increase countries productivity so that the population living in poverty and who are not able to acquire jobs to become financially independent can be removed from the sleeping labor supply.

The visible hand of government intervention is necessary to provide social safety net and welfare to catalyze the population living in poverty into the labor force; the overall wealth of the cities within the countries can materialized through higher level of productivity by a sustainable development microstructure. The role of government in providing public assistance, welfare programs, education and training, childcare, provision for the physically and mentally challenged and provisions for the elderly to the poorest segment of its population will contribute to the micromanagement of poverty from a country's municipal/local-city level and improved efforts for long term poverty alleviation on a macrolevel, as a form of sustainable development.

b. Role of Small Businesses, Corporations & Government

Corporations are the generator of wealth, conduit for innovation, knowledge and technology transfer. The role of corporation and its participation in its community in which it conducts its business is a form of sustainable development. Besides, brand equity, goodwill, corporate citizenship, corporations are facing a new external force in the horizon and this is sustainable development, which is the integration of economic, social and environmental forces. The question may arise as to how can these forces, once perceived as independent and specific in its own category and function, contribute to sustainable development? The answer lays in the rapid interdependencies and osmosis effect that technology and communications has impacted on these three separate but increasingly interdependent forces. The technological force causes a synergistic effect of economic, social and environmental fabrication that has become sustainable development as the new integrated force in the business environment. The business environment in which the corporations exist does not only face the economic, social and environmental challenges, it now faced the synergistic impact of sustainable development and a need to integrated the equation into its internal and external business environment. Hybrid forces are developing in the business environment due to the impact of technology and communication. The osmosistic effect that sustainable development has on Corporations, calls for a shift in its paradigm for strategic management in sustainable development and more active participation in social development issues.

Conclusively, through bisectoral integration approach, the role go government and the role of corporations, international organizations and institutions for knowledge and dissemination of public information, will achieve sustainable development for its civil society, country by country, state by state and city by city, village by village. Finally, Corporations can offset poverty by offering jobs, provide health benefits, and education and training programs to the poorest segment of civil society in an effort for poverty alleviation and achieving sustainable development.

2. Integrating the goals of Environmental Protection

Like a boat filled with people, floating on the sea continuously and no land in sight, hence the sense of destitute and the strong sense of uncertainty. As an international community, it is high priority to take care of the environment in which we live in, country by country, nation by nation, city by city and village by village. The Environment provides commodities and contributes to well being, growth and our daily livelihood. When planning for any economic, social and political activity and implementation of any type of deliverables, it is pertinent to integrate the compatible variable of environmental sustainability. Consideration must be given to integration of the Sustainable Development Equation. The equation is the culmination of management, systems and policies of Economic Prosperity, which is the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, Social Equity, which is the social progress which recognizes the needs of everyone and Environmental Sustainability which is the prudent use of natural resources and effective protection of the environment .The context in which the economic and social systems are enclosed allows for our societies to function and strive. No longer can one system be independent of the other. No longer can one system be more important than the other. It is important to protect the environment to achieve Sustainable Development Equity (SDE). Thus, through the integrations of the sustainable development equation and creating the value of sustainable development equity, countries can achieve a sustainable development biosphere.

C. Countries Challenges & Future Outlook

[Creating Sustainable Development Biosphere]

Systems & Mechanism of Action & Virtuous Cycle of Reintegration

A. Systems & Mechanism of Action

The ecological systems of sustainable development consists five subsystems. Firstly, the country's immediate environment ,which is the corporations,government,international organizations and institution of innovations and knowledge [i.e. academia], competitors within the designated industries, other nations and organic growth and development environment, which is known as the Sustainable Development Microsystems (SDM). Secondly, there will be a systems of interconnectivity between the immediate environments, where the country's corporations, government, international organizations and institution in its domestic environment for of innovations, knowledge research & development, which is known as the Sustainable Development Mesosystem (SDMe). Thirdly, the country's external environment setting, such as the domestic economic system will indirectly affect development, which is known as Sustainable Development Exosystem (SDE). Fourthly, the countries larger cultural context in its strategic geographical position of national economy, political culture and its subculture, which is known as Sustainable Development Macrosystem (SDMa).

B. Virtuous Cycle of Reintegration

A country's corporations, government, international organizations and institution of innovations and knowledge [i.e. academia], competitors within the designated industries, other nations and organic growth and development environment in the patterning of environmental events and its transition over the event's lifecycle, which is known as Sustainable Development Chronosystem (SDC). The system of SDM, SDMe, SDE, SDMa, SDC contains specific roles, norms and rules that can potently influence and mold sustainable development, all together. Thus, through the virtuous cycle of reintegration with the establishment of the sustainable development systems and mechanism of action and the system of value creation of sustainable development equity, countries can achieve the sustainable development biosphere.

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Henry Ekwuruke, Nigeria Executive Director, DGAi

Dear All,

This discussion has been intense and greatly rewarding but to repeat the fact remains that Sustainable development cannot be understood without youth voice and participation in the development of policies that affect their lives daily. Children and youth are the most affected and

lest empowered to address their issues around economic growth, social participation and development and environmental concerns as well as the issues of HIV/AIDS and the larger Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Youth-less is useless is one adage that we use often in Development Generation Africa International to qualify strategies that lack children and youth in planning and implementation processes, like the Nigerian National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) and our PRSPs.

At the national level, there are lots of children and youth working to achieve results that adults fear to trend, working tirelessly in avenues that are wanting and left off-donor efforts and are succeeding. For our various instruments to start working for our development and our poverty reduction and assist us, it has to incorporate the key factors of making children and youth participation central and of paramount importance, since sustainable development is about planning for the future and today!

Development Generation Africa International (DGAi) as a member of the Millennium Campaign and other initiatives aimed at poverty reduction and making the world a better place, joined the world leaders to make the Global Call to Action against Poverty Resounding at the local level and we are working directly with our people to build their skills, children and youth capacity and empowerment education geared towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in ensuring that the awareness about these instruments are understood through initiatives like the Children and Youth Forum on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria; and the Taking Information Technology Local projects, and sending our action statements in solidarity for sustainable world.

- - -

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Eric Lemetais, Consultant, France

Dear Colleagues

To ensure sustainable development, improvement in environmental agriculture and forestry practices, innovation and set-up small local food processing enterprises must be encouraged. Small Entrepreneurs must conduct projects with a positive environmental component and a promotion of biodiversity to ensure a sustainable environmental economic growth and locally produce value-added products by processing them into marketable commodities. For example, many of the agro-forestry and medicinal plants are not used in Africa for economic growth and alleviating poverty (Moringa tree, amaranthe, centella). The main goal must be to locally produce agro-biodiversity by-products, using no machinery and respecting environment

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Dai Ming, Professor of Economics in Jinan University

Dear All:

Sustainable development refers to inter-generational and inter-regional equities, i.e. equilibria in both time and space. For example, free industrial discharges into a river are costs to both future generations and the river's lower reaches, i.e. "externalities" (Marshall, A. 1890) in both time and space. But people generally concern the former only! So, one of main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development is contradiction or conflict between environment protection and spacial equilibrium, a dilemma to get rid of poverty by speeding up industrial development in the upper reaches of a river (usually poverty-stricken mountainous areas) while simultaneously avoiding environmental threats against the whole river system. Therefore, countries or regions faced with such a problem must find a systematic solution that takes account both of the economic development and the environment protection, of the efficiency and the equity, of the upper and the lower reaches of a river.

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Dated: February 7: 2008

Angela Lusigi, UNDP –UNEP

Dear colleagues,

Engaging with various actors at the country level reveals limited levels of awareness at national and sub-national levels about the importance of sustainable development. What is clear however is that there are a range of competing priorities for limited resources and the capacity to fully integrate internationally agreed plans and strategies into national and sub-national/local development plans and processes remains a challenge?

With regard to the particular questions posed:

What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

In many instances there is no comprehensive approach to addressing these three issues 'together'. Often the practice has been to develop three separate strategies or plans of action to address each area without identifying and building on the linkages between growth, human development and environmental sustainability for instance. In addition, these issues are often dealt with by different departments, ministries, and organizations without a clear framework for coordination.

Where there have been attempts to integrate sustainable development into prevailing national development plans these have often led to clear policy statements without the identification of underlying strategies for their implementation. The translation from policies to strategies, interventions and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes is an important area of work and various tools are being developed and piloted in some countries.

Examples of work that is currently underway to strengthen the linkages between poverty and environment in national development plans and processes can be found at www.unpei.org, a joint

UNDP/UNEP initiative that seeks to provide financial and technical support to countries to build capacity for mainstreaming poverty-environment linkages into national development planning processes, such as PRSP's and MDG Achievement Strategies.

How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level ?

While some work should go into refining these tools to allow the underlying analysis to better capture relevant issues in all the three pillars of sustainable development as a basis for designing appropriate response, it is clear that a lot more work needs to be done on creating a knowledge base of country specific evidence to guide decision making.

Often the data and information available for decision making is incomplete and does not respond to the specific needs of the decisions makers at local and national levels. For instance, decision makers need to know which kinds of interventions could be prioritized that would allow for the achievement of growth, human development and environmental sustainability. There also needs to be a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring the outcome of these interventions that feeds into subsequent planning processes. These scenarios are very location specific and the local/national capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate this information is a crucial input in developing effective national and local development frameworks.

Regards,

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Dr. Raul Montenegro, President de Funam, Argentina

Dear Members of the group:

My name is Raul Montenegro. I am president of FUNAM (an NGO from Argentina founded in 1982) and professor of evolutionary biology at the National University of Cordoba in Argentina. In 2004 I received the Alternative Nobel prize (RLA, 2004, Sweden), and the Global 500 Award from United Nations Environment Programme in 1989 (Brussels, Belgium). I'm academic and also activist. My background is in ecology, environmental issues and sustainable development. We work (through FUNAM) with groups of citizens and indigenous groups both in Argentina and other countries. I have been Board Member of ELCI (Environment Liaison Center International, Nairobi, Kenya), Earth Action (USA and UK), Biomass Users Network (UK) and Vice-president of Greenpeace Argentina. You can see our work and achievements at www.funam.org.ar. FUNAM has consultative status at the Roster of ECOSOC (UN, New York).

These are the main questions we received as guides. Within each question (paragraph) we included our first comments, to be developed more in depth in the following sessions.

1. What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

First of all there is a technical and conceptual barrier.

First issue. Most of governments and private companies (even citizens) don't consider that countries cannot survive without a clear balance between the surface devoted to short food chains (agriculture, forestry with rapid growth species), and the surface occupied by balanced ecosystems (P/R near or equal to 1, where "P" is production, input of Solar energy, and "R" respiration), e.g. natural forests, natural wetlands, natural grasslands, etc. A country without such a balance will face strong and cruel crisis. Currently there are a silent battle between short and long food chain strategies (short food chain strategy: industrial agriculture and forestry which replace most of natural ecosystems; long food chain strategy: hunters and gatherers with low scale agriculture and their current version). I arised such issue at the University of Salzburg several months ago. It's important to show, I think, that natural protected areas (in the traditional meaning of the issue) cannot ensure the survival of nature (mainly due to their total scarce surface, and the MacArthur-Wilson Principle on Island Biogeography). Lot of decision makers and citizens erroneously thought that parks and biosphere reserves are sufficient for conserving ecosystems. In my country 80% of natural forest have been destroyed, and the plantation of RR soya is continuously rising (currently >17 million hectares with RR soya). Another critical point is that each hectare of any balanced ecosystem (e.g. Chaco forest, Paranaense forest, Amazonian forest) is unique, and cannot be "conserved" with "other" surface of the presumably same ecosystem (or a sample in a national park). Besides this fact, more the ecosystem is great, greater their different ecological arrangements (like it happens with the Yungas forests in South America). The amazonian forest in Bolivia (now menaced by soya companies, most of them from Argentina) is totally different to the amazonian forest in different Brazilian sectors. We call this the Ecological Relativity Principle. Now there are calculations vis-a-vis the surface depletion of the amazonian ecosystem in the following years, but even this estimate consider that "remaining" surfaces "are" the Amazonian forest, and this is not totally true. Thus, the surface devoted to crops and to natural ecosystems could be balanced. More the country destroy their natural ecosystems (and water basins), more the country create great crisis, and increasing dependence of foreign exports.

Second issue: lifestyles. Currently there are individual consumptions of (total) energy (food, transport, etc.) ranging (in different countries) from 3,000 kilocalories per day per person (small indigenous people in voluntary isolation e.g.), to 400,000 kilocalories per day per person (industrial people in First World countries). Overconsumption has been creating a new and irreal version of poverty: poverty it's not to have (e.g.) 400,000 kilocalories per person per day. Western consumption is seen as the goal for most of the countries of the world. There are not serious considerations on sustainable lifestyles. Such wrong vision endorses the permanent growth of national economies and individual consumption patterns. If the goal in Third World countries it's to re create western lifestyles in each village and person, such vision increases the magnitude of expected (local) crisis. Currently there are (more or less) 20% of the world population with extreme overconsumption, and 80% with a range of consumption patterns, most of them near starvation. If humans don't decide which is a "sustainable lifestyle", that means more access to water, food and health for the poor (see above), and the cutting of consumption patterns among rich people.

Third issue: population growth. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without population control. Population growth is closely related with paragraph 1 (balance between productive ecosystems and natural ecosystems), and paragraph 2 (consumption per capita).

Governments, private companies, universities and huge segments of citizens face the barrier of not having clear idea of this "complex" of variables.

Dr. Raul A. Montenegro,
Presidente de FUNAM, Argentina
<http://www.funam.org.ar/quienes.htm>

Teresa Flores, Environmental Analyst, Bolivia

Dear All,

I believe this discussion is extremely important for our future. I very much agree with the analysis of Steve Bass and Dr D.B.Dalal-Clayton, particularly when Dr. Clayton says “But the evidence indicates that either they do not understand what sustainable development really means and what needs to be done to put it into effect”. Most of the governments and international organizations have been paying a lip service to SD, but the fact is that economic growth remains very unsustainable and everywhere the depletion of natural resources is increasing. Just Scandinavian countries have done good steps towards sustainable development; in other parts of the world the reverse is true.

In developing countries still prevails the idea that first should be economic growth and then would possible to invest in environmental protection. China is seen as the best example without considering the tremendous social and environmental costs of its model of development.

In addition, it is easy to say “economic growth with environmental protection” but to reconcile both is difficult because current development destroys nature and depletes natural resources. That is why that at the core of the idea of sustainable development is changing production and consumption patterns. This means that the whole linear system of industrial production based on overexploitation of natural resources, overproduction of unnecessary goods, and huge waste production, has to be changed. The change towards a circular system of production includes adopting clean technologies, mitigation measures, become carbon neutral, saving energy, using less resources, recycling, among others.

All these at the short term impose additional costs to development but at the medium and long term bring more economic, social and environmental benefits.

Fortunately currently we have enough knowledge and environmental friendly technologies for development without destruction that should be emphasized when dealing with economic growth.

Summarizing in my opinion the most important barriers for sustainable development are:

1. Lack of understanding that the common good of humankind is more important than creating wealth at expenses of the Earth's stability.
2. Lack of understanding that to achieve sustainable development the focus on economic growth should be shifted to economic wellbeing.
3. Lack of understanding of what sustainable natural resource use means (not using them beyond the limits of regeneration).
3. Climate change, which is going to impose huge social and economic costs everywhere, and crops failure, particularly in the tropics.

4. Oil depletion, which is raising oil price hence increasing biofuels production, which in turn means less land for crops and increasing food prices, therefore hunger in developing nations. Oil depletion is also going to enhance the use of more dirty energies.

It follows that development to be sustainable--in the current circumstances of the rapid melting of the poles that is going to affect more whether patterns worldwide-- in the first place should curb greenhouse emissions, avoid deforestation and protect the phytoplakton.

Kind regards,

Teresa Flores,
Environmental and sustainability analyst Bolivia
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Nick Surr, Consultant Abt Associates

Dear colleagues,

The first three days have exposed us to a sample of 'first thoughts' that is impressive in the range of contributors' geography, background and institutional affiliation. While I am eager to read other 'first thoughts', allow me to respond to this initial harvest.

Our first charge was to identify/discuss the primary challenges to integrating the three 'dimensions' of sustainable development—social, economic and environmental. Several colleagues (Onah, Abumoghli, Belvaux and Ray) have identified challenges to effective progress on any of these fronts. These include corruption, inadequate education and/or training, war/armed conflict, fundamentalism that undermines democratic processes. I have no argument with any of these. They are all critical challenges. However, they do not address specifically the challenges of integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development. Further, by claiming that the most important challenges to (integrated) sustainable development are barriers to effective implementation of current development efforts, they appear to assume that if current development efforts did not have these barriers, sustainable development would result.

To say that I disagree, and I do, is not to say that I do not value efforts to reduce corruption and armed conflict, or to increase access to research, education and training. It is to say that to effectively pursue, promote and encourage integrated sustainable development, we need to re-think the basic goals and strategies of development, from the ground up.

I have some disagreement, at least in part, with only three comments.

Ganiev reminds us that "the number of poor countries has not been decreasing over the last 50 years, and ...getting out of poverty trap for poor countries is extremely difficult." This is clearly the case, and deserves wider attention, as well as a central focus from this discussion group. However, he goes on to state "[this] does not allow LDCs to address all three mentioned dimensions of development... as equally important, as they have to draw resources from the same pool. Therefore,[they] can adequately address only few acute environmental issues...those that... affect their economic growth or lead to immediate environmental or humanitarian crisis." The assumption that I would question here is that economic, social and environmental dimensions of development are necessarily competing drains from "the same pool". If we equate these three

dimensions with three ministries (or sets of ministries!), each with distinct budgets, competing agendas and constituencies, etc, sure. However, the organizers of this panel very wisely asked us to begin to think about ways these three dimensions that should and can be integrated.

The second response that I would take issue with is from Dr Okun “Environmental protection efforts may need to be staged at a later time in the nation's development in order to accentuate a country's attractiveness during its early industrial development.” This is a very cogent and honest summary of a dominant perspective, and clearly reflects a dominant reality. Investors and multinational corporations certainly do seek out locations that have the lowest costs—in labor, in taxes, in raw materials, in environmental and social regulation. This is a critical fact of dominant practice. And political leaders at every level—national to local— certainly do continue to feel tremendous pressure to accept continued or lowered levels of these as a necessary price to meet their goals of investment, employment, etc. However, I take issue with three apparent assumptions. First, that ‘environmental protection’ only works when it is principally based on regulations. Second, that ‘development’ is a unilinear, progressive process of neat ‘stages’. Finally, and most importantly, that this dynamic (otherwise termed ‘race to the bottom’) should be accepted as an unavoidable, inevitable, necessary given in the world as we look to the future, including the very near future of next week!

Borne stresses that there is inherent conflict in the definitions and goals of SD, and suggests the first step be to “ identify the primary conflicting visions of how sustainable development perceived”. This traditional political science approach—of identifying a range of conflicting positions based on self-interests of various blocs, strikes me as a mis-guided first step. Rather, we should struggle among ourselves to articulate an integrated vision (and strategy) in the most inclusive, public-spirited of ways. And then, we can easily consider the interest groups most resistant to working towards these goals.

Of this initial round of responses, nearly all give us seeds worth nurturing.

Lyngdoh supports “investment in green business opportunities at the community level in the developing countries.” I wholeheartedly agree, but would add in “developed” countries as well, and would ask that he and others begin to articulate more fully the purpose of these (including mitigation of climate change, but several key others as well); and the scope, nature and organization of these ‘green investments’.

Fernagut points to the great potential of supporting “small and medium micro-enterprises”. (Although I hasten to add that my understanding of the economic development dimension is inadequately summarized by the single word ‘profit’!).

Adewole points to the importance of involving people at the grassroots. He also suggests it is time for developing countries to stop following the policies (and examples?) of the developed countries.

Gaanderse points to the importance of local governments, adequately supported by higher levels of govt.

Ennis writes that INCLUSION of all citizens is crucial, both as a means toward any desirable end, and as an important goal in its own right.

Bass recognizes that dominant dev trajectories—even when they effectively – are degrading in their social and env impacts, and urges efforts towards “entrenched structural problems”. He also points to the importance of ‘mobilizing publics’.

Dalal-Clayton writes that the many good examples are “mere islands in the broader oceans of development in which all the major environmental and social indicators and trends continue to deteriorate alarmingly “. He calls for greater political will from our leaders; greater ‘demand-pull’ from potential users, greater ‘stake-holder pressure’. And warns of the folly of allowing climate change efforts alone to displace the full range of other pressing concerns.

Fulai writes “What is truly needed is the establishment of scientifically-determined but locally adjusted sustainability thresholds to guide the often implicit weighting exercise” and a “much larger constituency for sustainable development in each country needs to be cultivated and become active in development strategy making”.

Ekwuruke urges us not to forget the pivotal (potential) roles of young people, stressing their political participation, it seems (I entirely agree, but would add their employment, and their pivotal roles in local and mass culture.)

Lemetais urges a focus on “improvement in environmental agriculture and forestry practices, innovation and setting-up of small [env-benign] local food processing enterprises (“local production of agro-biodiversity by-products”).

Ming presents an example, an image that is very powerful, and of widespread relevance: “Dilemma to get rid of poverty by speeding up industrial development in the upper reaches of a river (usually poverty-stricken mountainous areas) while simultaneously avoiding environmental threats against the whole river system. Countries or regions... must find a systematic solution that takes account both of the economic development and the environment protection, of the efficiency and the equity, of the upper and the lower reaches of a river.”

These colleagues share an interest in shifting of focus towards greater local participation and inclusion. What, then would we like our fellow humans (both fellow citizens in our respective home countries and people around the world) to better, and more widely, and more fully participate in? This is linked to the several calls for wider understanding and awareness: what would we like our fellow humans to better, more widely and more fully understand? It is essential that this content be crystal clear and tightly focused, especially in its initial framing, able to be expressed very plainly, yet opening up broad vistas of learning, achievement, enterprise and cooperation.

I suggest we think about this in terms of two distinct roles, but potentially played by each person: the role of citizen-consumer; and the role of citizen-producer. Let us begin with the more indirect relationship: the role of citizen-consumer.

The great majority in the world today purchase a major share of the goods they consume. This means that for most of us, our impacts on the ecosystems and the ecological foundations of production are indirect. It also means that these daily (or near daily) purchases entail a wide range of indirect social as well as environmental impacts.

What is the frontier that we would like to communicate to our fellows regarding this role, that nearly all of us share (across income levels, countries, religious/ethnic backgrounds, etc)? It seems to me the following. That essentially all of us would rather, if given a choice, have benign, positive, beneficent impacts than destructive, negative or harmful ones. The possibility—that is remarkably recent, only the past few decades, compared to the millennia of trade and the centuries of currency-based markets— is that we may come to have increasing choice in these matters. The radically new possibility has been initiated by ‘eco-labels’, ‘fair-trade’-type labels; corporate codes of conduct; ‘ethical’ investment screens, as well as by ‘social and environmental assessments of programs and policies. The radically new possibility is that citizens (as tax-payers, consumers, investors, employees and managers) can begin to include real knowledge of the social and environmental consequences of their/our actions, and begin to make decisions based on this knowledge. This frontier of ethical curiosity and agency is arguably the single most positive development in global civilization over the past few generations, if not longer.

As I stated in my first email, non-producers profoundly affect the incentive structure of producers across the globe. And this frontier of civic knowledge and agency (over indirect impacts) promises precisely the dramatic shift in this incentive structure of producers that is needed. It opens up the landscape of development possibilities dramatically, including a whole-scale reconsideration of the role of smallholders in production.

However, this frontier of civic agency depends on accurate knowledge, and widespread appreciation, understanding and access to it.

Two questions seem paramount here:

What would we like to know about the differential impacts of production practices, and through them, the differential impacts of our dollars (as tax-payers, consumers, corporate managers and investors)?

How do we learn these impacts?

Cheers,

Nick Shorr

Consultant for Abt Associates.

Post-doctoral fellow in NSF-funded Human Dimensions of Global Change at Carnegie Mellon University,

Dept of Engineering and Public Policy

Lee Chan, Public Works and Government Services, Canada

Dear Colleagues;

There are three major challenges: 1) Population in developing countries, 2) Consumerism in North America and increasingly Asia, 3) Politics.

1) There are far too many people on this planet to support. The greater the population, the greater amounts of resources required and consequently the greater the environmental stress. This leads to conflicts or exacerbates existing ones. At the point of no return, the environment is unable to sustain such a large population therefore shortages occur which leads to poverty, then disease. Large families are still the norm in certain developing regions to offset child mortality.

Solution and possible way of UN involvement:

Population growth must be dealt with: birth control, education, social programmes (teach sustainable agriculture), promoting women's rights and self-sufficiency, medical assistance (immunization etc.) as a start. Such measures will stabilize the population in developing countries. Such programmes are in existence already, however these should be expanded.

2) North American (and increasingly Asian) mentality of consumerism/materialism. This is as much (if not more) of a challenge as a minute percentage of the world's population (ie. North America) consume the majority of resources. Imagine the profoundly much extensive impact of China's population as it's citizens climb toward the Western mentality of the standard of life.

But how do we change this mentality?

Solution:

One way is to model after Scandanavian/European countries: stable and sustainable population, much resources, low pollution, social mentality (family is more important than materialism, more

family-related days granted by employers), overall "greener" mentality than in the rest of the world.

3) Politics: our colleagues have already touched upon this challenge. Perhaps short of having strong and wide-ranging international "green-based" leadership coupled with innovative grass-roots movement, I see no other alternatives.

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Joseph A. Giacalone, Professor Economics NY USA

Economic growth, social development, and environmental protection are much too difficult to pursue simultaneously. Any such effort will face overwhelming constraints. History has shown that the focus should be on economic growth and progress in the other areas will evolve in due time. Unleashing human potential by encouraging entrepreneurship and minimizing regulatory and environmental restrictions will stimulate domestic and foreign investment, large and small. For poor, developing countries, economic growth is the prerequisite for the other goals.

Dr. Joseph A. Giacalone
Professor of Economics
St. John's University, NY

Dai Ming, Professor of Economics in Jinan University; China

(To follow yesterday's contribution) Yes, development is a right of all people, but this development must not come at a cost to future generations, as same to where else. For this, we (Qin Jian, Dai Xieer and I) put forward an institutional arrangement called "the industrial discharge quotas along river reaches", which can be abstracted as below:
The maximum of industrial discharges bearable to a water system can be, as quotas, distributed and traded fairly among reaches of a river. Thus any firm will be allowed to choose freely either to invest in sewage purification or to purchase the industrial discharge quotas (IDQ), and some local areas with vulnerable environments may also transfer their unused IDQ to others so as to obtain corresponding compensations which can be used to develop the low-discharge industries in harmony with ecological environments. It should be implemented the way of "step by step" because of the difficulty to control industrial emissions. As the first step and a test, the Local Area Quotas (LAQ, differentiated from WAQ/the wide area quotas & TAQ/the total area quotas) for the industrial emissions along the Pearl River in Guangdong province in south China should be feasible as long as obtaining supports from such authoritative organization as UN/DESA, UNDP, UNCSD/DSD, UNEP etc.

Professor of Economics in Jinan University, Guangzhou, China

Kanan Ajmera, Architect and Urban Designer, USA

Dear Tariq, Hans, Linda and Colleagues,

Thanks so much for providing a venue for what will hopefully be a very useful dialogue. I would like to address your first question today.

What are the main barriers for countries integrating the objectives of sustainable development; i.e. economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

In my opinion before we start talking about barriers we need to have a substantial discussion about the three "pillars" of sustainable development. Let me start the discussion on a lively note, with a play of words. I was reading through some of the material that was sent out before the start of the discussion which names the three ideals mentioned above as the pillars of sustainable development.

As an architect, the analogy of "pillars" just does not work for me. Pillars have to be independent of each other, equal in size and proportion to be able to support the superstructure. We all know that Economic growth more often than not comes at the cost of someone's social development and everyone's environmental degradation. They are mutually reliant and if we try to 'silo' these ideals our discussion will come crashing down like a pack of cards.

These three lofty ideals or "cornerstones" are important measures of a successful "sustainable" society and hence any piecemeal exercise/enterprise taken up anywhere in the world by any government, or its people, will not be successful. If any one of the issues outweighs the other tremendously, it will not work either and yet these three ideals are unequal and must be unequal to have the right impact and help achieve our utopia.

One must have economic growth to have enough impact on social development and yet economic growth beyond a certain point would be harmful to our environmental practices and be at the cost of social development somewhere else.

So what are the checks and balances?

What really is the perfect equation?

They are obviously different for different people and countries around the world.

How do we measure these three ideals? If they really want to be pillars of this movement – they cannot depend on each other. So should we be looking for different "pillars" or re-define what these three words, (ideals in my mind) mean to us.

Now let us address the barriers of integrating these policies.

It is imperative for us to have "vehicles" /"tools" (as some people have called it) to take us towards "sustainable development". Economic Growth, social development and environmental protection are not the "vehicles".

These "vehicles" will need to be tailored differently for different countries around the world though we need some meta-idea to generate and maybe keep the "vehicles" on track.

So almost immediately, I think, one can see that this has to be "grass-root" effort. It cannot be controlled or dictated by governmental policies, capital providers, social entrepreneurs, etc and yet the process must be initiated by these very bodies along with people and their people states.

We will talk more of 'how to solve the problem' in the near future discussions but for now we must talk about what really are the barriers for "sustainable development".

Economic growth, social development and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive. What are the checks and balances? As I mentioned earlier, one cannot overgrow economically at the cost of environmental protection and social development.

In many ways, I believe the answers lie in this very problem. Can someone's economic growth be another 'social development' and that in turn is everyone's 'environmental protection'. Can the giver of one virtue, also be a receiver of the same virtue in a different context?

Prof. Glenn Okun succinctly describes the issues of our ever growing capitalist society, its dependence on economic growth to achieve environmental protection and in some ways social development.

I disagree with him about the fact that "Environmental protection efforts may need to be staged at a later time in the nation's development in order to accentuate a country's attractiveness during its early industrial development".

This is our challenge. We cannot allow China (and most definitely the United States) to continue to grow at the expense of the world's environmental resources. Yes, we have to give them a chance to develop but they have to develop differently from how the United States and Europe did. We have to find different "vehicles" for different people in different times.

It is also true that each nation state cannot achieve this in isolation (unless they resort to the old, tried and tested method which will further disparate economic growth, create and maintain hegemony of a few large powerful bodies until all the balances fall apart and we find yet another destructive system.)

This forum can only barely touch the tip of the iceberg – because very soon the question and discussion would be about the very nature of man and his need to dominate his environment both literally and metaphorically!!

We will have to look beyond the boundary lines on the land, the color of the money to realize this dream. No one nation can be the greatest in the world unless it carries many other little nation states upwards with it.

Maybe herein lays the solution?

I agree with every single word that Mr. Steve Bass has so eloquently put forward yesterday. We need to delve into some of his statements to further evolve this conversation beyond 'We have screwed it all up' and we need to 're-think everything down to how we breathe' to make a difference. I do not want to over simplify the issues but we have to start with some axiom and some goal to get anywhere.

'The Problem'(?)

The 'economic growth first' paradigm that has caused poverty and environmental problems to persist is the very thing that we continue to rely on to solve those same problems.

One possible Solution (?)

From an 'internationally imposed' agenda to a 'globally constructed' endeavor shared by many.

Here is my two bit which is food for thought and a discussion tomorrow.

- 1) Can we exploit the very problem (the paradoxes as Steve puts it) to help us construct this "globally constructed" endeavor?
- 2) Is this 'globally constructed endeavor' so heterogeneous that we simply cannot tell what is holding it together?

I will put forth my day dream and would like everyone's thoughts on the same. I think we need thousands of such endeavors (vehicles) which are local in flavor and but international in impact and theme.

The Goal : Sustainable Development

The Vehicle : "Sustainability in built environments

(I agree with Dr. Gregory about the confusion and dichotomy between "Sustainability" and Sustainable Development.)

Can this endeavor to build 'sustainable' buildings, off-the grid houses run by fossil fuel free energy, drive neighborhoods achieve social development, economic growth and provide the obvious environmental protection to our planet?

My thoughts on the same tomorrow.

Best,

Kanan Ajmera Assoc. AIA, LEED AP

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Dated: February 8, 2008

Dai Ming, Professor of Economics in Jinan University, USA

Dear Mr. Ajmera,

You suggested not allowing China to continue to grow at the expense of the world's environmental resources. Maybe you are right but the problem is: How can you persuade people living in LDCs (including China), which are more than 2/3 of the world's population, to stop their

endeavor of poverty reduction? In fact, there might be similar problem within a country faced by its government: How to persuade people living in poverty-stricken areas (e.g. the upper reaches of a river) to stop their industrializing process chasing after industrialized ones? So we have to find a solution to take care both of the developed and developing countries, the lower and upper reaches, the rich and poor persons, which is probably the different "vehicles" you mentioned in contribution for different people in different times.

Dr. Dai Ming
Professor of Economics in Jinan University,
Guangzhou, China

Benedict Osakwe Odigwe, Nigeria

Dear All,

Thank you so very much for your contributions to the eDiscussion. We should all know and recognize the fact that an effective Sustainable Development relies more on poverty reduction strategies and poverty-focused lending, which are central to achieving development objectives. Poverty Reduction strategies should be based on;

1. Broad citizen participation and assent;
2. Comprehensive in scope
3. Long -term in perspective
4. Results-oriented in approach
5. External partners
6. Access to Financial Institutions and resources.

Every country owned poverty reduction strategies must and should provide the basis for all financial Institutions lending as well as debt relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). Financial institutions are using technology to help bring knowledge to the most remote and inaccessible corners of the earth. Our learning approaches often combine face-to-face and distance learning through new and traditional media, including the Internet and videoconferencing.

Developing countries ought to use the knowledge and learning opportunities they get from International Financial organizations to make real change in their countries. AS public official in Mexico, who followed a learning series in anti-corruption for public officials, implemented a programme in his state upon return. The changes he instituted resulted in a 64 percent increase in resources collected in his state.

Credit need be giving to the World Bank for taking an active role for the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) which was held in August, 2002. the World Bank approach to sustainable development has changed considerably since the since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Thus, the body has sharpened the poverty focus of our work, expanded support for social services, equitable broad-based growth, good governance, and social inclusion, and are integrating gender and environmental considerations into our development efforts. Hence, the global Financial Institutions e.g the World Bank, ADB, IMF etc must endeavor to ;

1. Support developing countries and the U.N. process to participate fully in regional global preparatory meetings in future and previous conferences;

2. Support the poverty reduction focus of the sustainable development agenda;
3. Strongly supports the alignment of Summit and Ministerial Review objectives and the Millennium Development GOALS;
4. Hope to see increases in overseas development assistance, domestic resource mobilization, and market access;
5. Urge the adoption of "accounting for sustainable development" in national accounts.

Finally I should cast your mind back to the previous 2002/2003 World Development Report, entitled "Sustainable Development with a Dynamic Economy: Growth, Poverty, Social Cohesion, and the Environment", will help establish an integrated view of sustainable development. We should also carry out analytical work on a number of key thematic issues, including innovative financing for sustainable development, poverty and environment linkages.

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Alicia Villamizar, Chief of Natural Resources Institute, Venezuela

Dear colleagues. I considered as a prerequisite to achieve the SD the following issues that also, are interrelated:

- 1) Enforcement of Law
- 2) To fight the corruption
- 3) Political willing

The last United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report (released on November 2007) has warned that the world should focus on the development impact of climate change that could bring unprecedented reversals in poverty reduction, nutrition, health and education. That's means: MG's achievement would be very difficult to reach by several poor countries. But even, if the governments do not attend their present weaknesses in the three issues before I referred and they do not consider the preventions (adaptation and mitigation measures) to be prepared to the impacts of climate change, the sustainable development will be a remote or perhaps an impossible dream.

Several countries (including countries from LDC, LLDC, SIDS and DC) have an extensive and comprehensive legal framework (at national and international level) that cover all or at least the most important legal requirements that represents the bases to be able to fulfill MDG's. Most of them have been parties for long time to the most common strategic plans and programs built by the UN community in order to fight against the low levels of development and quality of life. But the high corruption levels into the governments and the imposition of the political ideology from part of governor party dilute the institutional autonomy from judicial, legislative and executive powers at country level, even more significant, at regional and local level preventing the implementation of public policies related with their sustainable development international commitments.

In these conditions, the possibility of build a positive interaction between the civil organizations and no-governmental actors with the governors is very limited and weak. Even to form civil groups or non-governmental organizations into the own countries is very limited. I consider that the effort of the UN community should be conducted to demand the governments who have

received economic aid or support for social projects, the presentation of account status reports and according of the results, decide if they can continue receiving it. The participation of civil society into the social programs (mainly in those who receive international support), like a counterpart in the decision making process, should be also a conditioner for receiving financial or building capacity from UN assistance. This last issue will enforce the work of the local partners groups with the Country Team (CT) into the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). Also, the capacity building of the local people in issues related with the public policies related with the MG's is a powerful tool that enables these people to take greater advantage from the AID that comes from the external assistance and also to be alert from their corrupted governors. I consider a contradiction to maintain budgets to support these types of governors. Thus, we are not contributing with the goals of the sustainable development, but the opposite.

The responsibility of the governors to give their people concrete responses to reduce poverty improves the environmental performance and defines the economic system that adjust better to their cultural and social needs facing the external demands of globalization and fulfills the MG's. All these should be monitored not only for the local people but for the entire international community, this means, by the UN community.

Finally, the absence of political willing should be considered not only a signal of incompetence but the un-attendance of the governors' duties with their people, reason why it should be considered a violation to the rights of the citizens, even though if it affects the poor ones.

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Samir Azizi, R&D company manager, Morocco

Dear all

I agree with all of you about the importance of this issue.

I want just to make some remarks:

Sustainable development is not a new idea or solution. Any value we can have in our life could be sustainable if we can preserve it and that is the goal of any person regarding his health, knowledge, finance...

The second remark is that we need to believe that any sustainable value is creating benefit.

In developing countries and in Africa precisely, my opinion is that the work must be divided on two parts:

The first is related to government:

They must focus more on their traditional role related to education and health of their citizen.

Regarding environment respects, I really don't think that actual governments are capable of application of strategic preservation. Just educated citizen could change the situation.

The second part is related to non governmental units:

With their neutral position they could make pressure on government and educate citizen on environmental issues.

Lot of Financial helps given to governments could be directed to private actors in education and health that will create a dynamic that government will never achieve.

Finally, no sustainable development could be achieved without believing on the capability to make profit from it. SME is a key of this issue and all help must be given to develop:

R&D SEM

SME for natural resources added values applications.

Since am manager of R&D company in Morocco related to sustainable development (natural resources, nanobiomaterials and bio-energies), am really surprised that as SME, we have very small chance to be part of this global action and so we have to work alone with our small capacity to achieve big strategies.

Innovation is the key issues for developing countries and Innovation is R&D with educated people in good health capable of taking the challenge to jump in the future and not to the past.

Kind Regards

Dr. Azizi samir

R&D company manager

Nanocomposites and Bioconcepts SARL

Agadir-Morocco

Dated: February 10, 2008

Dr. J. G. Ray, Reader & Director of Environment Studies

Dear all,

This is in continuation of what I have scribbled earlier and also connected to part of my personal replies to some authors.

I believe that the social element in sustainable development is a highly complex issue which needs serious consideration by all international agencies.

We need a 'revisional' approach of all of the developmental history of human societies in the light of modern science to achieve a perfect and sustainable development of our societies in future.

For example even the concept of population overgrowth as an issue affecting sustainable development is to be carefully looked into. Population growth is a serious issue because of the change in consumption rate of modern humans. Excessive consumption which certain so called 'developed' societies follow are not signs of true and sustainable development. If all societies in the world work towards such an affluent style as the end of development the world cannot progress but end only in more conflicts and catastrophic turns. It is not possible for human societies to survive infinitely with a consumerist life style. Therefore, the role of life style in sustainable development is to be examined thoroughly and internationally. Population control has a meaning only when a certain perfect life style is well defined for societies to survive and progress infinitely.

Ancient societies had natural social mechanisms of population's control which were spiritually also significant. Social institutions of ancient societies such as Hindu and Buddhist ascetism of Asia and the Christian ascetism and celibacy of the west are part of such naturally evolved social systems controlling over growth of populations and also methods to teach people the spiritual value of simple life style and of less consumption.

The physical control of population that present day societies insist have many anti-evolutionary principles in it which may harmfully affect the human species in its survival during struggles of existence which are beyond expectations in future. I am not arguing of leaving homo sapiens as just a biological entity but to take in to account all aspects of the human biological existence as a species within the earth system, especially when we consider the different aspects of growth and development.

Modern societies ignore much of the religious ways as dogma and myth. They often ignore the role of religious systems as simply nothing to be related to science. Materialistic outlook which emerged in the world after the Industrial revolution created such an ambience in the world. But the world need both for its existence.

Ecology is a holistic science which integrates all aspects of the complete truth. To develop sustainably means to accept all aspects of ecological truth as basic principles of human existence.

What I want to emphasize is that the developmental crisis of modern humans is basically a moral and spiritual crisis as well. Unless and until global societies look into the truth of spiritual needs and the various dimensions of spiritual development in sustainable worldly existence of human societies, humans will not be able to solve the problems of social developmental crisis.

We really need global systems to look into global spiritual developmental processes as well. Under the UN systems we do not have an efficient mechanism to follow the integration of science and religion.

Evolution of such a set up is essential to sustainable development.

Ecology is a moral science - a science that teaches humans to behave in a true way in nature to attain perfect and sustainable happiness. Ecology is the ultimate Science and Religion. It is high time that world nations look into the issue seriously and find solutions to the same.

Sincerely Yours,

Dr J. G. Ray

Reader & Director of Environment Studies,
St Berchmans College Changanacherry, Kerala, India.
(Full Member of the Ukrainian Academy of Ecological Sciences).

Whitney D.W. Smith, Jurist Doctorate Candidate

The incentive based program.

When addressing sustainable development it is important to focus on the needs, capabilities and limitations of the target population. Population limitations are justly defined by economic, environmental and social or cultural constraints. These limitations complicate a discussion of sustainable development because policymakers and governments are no longer dealing with a “model population” but rather a complex community with a variety of concerns.

It can be assumed that an individual has a primary need to produce enough to support himself/herself and his/her family. Generally, the degree of need depends on the socioeconomic status of the majority of that community. The higher the degree the more difficult a discussion on sustainable development will be.

Recognizing this as a primary need makes it easier to construct an incentive based program to introduce and perpetuate a dialogue on sustainable development. Addressing economic concerns first, followed by education and policy guiding the growth.

For example, a government with fewer economic constraints could focus on subsidizing its populations’ incomes, alleviating any financial pressure, offering the flexibility to discuss and address sustainable development. To encourage sustainable development, participation should be affirmed by mandatory incentives. Implementing educational programs would reinforce an incentive based model.

Even with social, cultural and religious differences, and economic and environmental constraints, introducing and tailoring these incentive based programs to work within a community’s parameters would be a step towards addressing a primary need, while introducing sustainable development.

Whitney D.W. Smith
Jurist Doctorate Candidate

Mary Ennis, Executive Director, DPI

Dear all,

War, natural (or not) disasters, HIV/AIDS, poverty, lack of education, undeveloped capacity of individuals and communities, lack of political will or just plain poor leadership, ineffective legislation and policies or inadequate enforcement of good legislation and policies all serve to create havoc on the realization of sustainable development. And the objectives of sustainable development will never be met unless steps are taken to alleviate the impact of these circumstances in the communities in which they exist. And it is people that make up our communities, and it is for them that we aspire to sustainable development.

Investments must be made to alleviate poverty. If one goes to bed hungry every night, one cannot be expected to think further than how to ease the hunger pains. He or she most certainly will not be agonizing over how best to address the complexities of sustainable development; and if one is uneducated, he or she will not even know what the concept means. If one is uninformed or does not have the right to vote, little will be done about poor leadership or the lack of political will by office holders.

Effective strategies to manage the impact of disasters and disease; to support the empowerment of individuals affected by war, violence and abuse; to allow women, persons with disabilities, indigenous persons and youth to exercise their rights are all critical to building the capacity of people and communities to work together for development.

Progressive and sustainable development cannot, and will not be achieved without the involvement of the people, the individuals who make up a community and experience its circumstances. They must be included in any discussions and decision-making concerning their lives and their futures. And, most importantly, they must be supported to understand the nature and purpose of the processes they are engaging in as well as the other actors involved, or it will be very difficult for them to participate or contribute fully. Unless their participation is really meaningful, little will be accomplished and development will stagnate.

Everyone can play a role in sustainable development, but if all the stakeholders do not communicate effectively and well and do not make an effort to listen to and understand one another's views and ideas, we set ourselves up for failure.

Forums (such as this one) must be frequent and public and global. Forums which support communities, individuals, governments, corporations, academics, environmentalists, and so many more to come together to teach and to learn, to exchange ideas and to brainstorm can go a long way to resolving problems and developing strategies – but only if they come together under an umbrella of respect for the experiences of one another and for what everyone present has to offer towards achieving the ultimate goal. We talk about political will, but sustainable development requires the will of far more than politicians.

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Meltem Yilmaz, Assoc. Prof. Hacettepe University, Turkey

Dear Participants,

A great part of discussions on achieving sustainable development are based on poverty reduction, legacy and international collaboration. Everybody agree that these approaches have vital importance for achieving a sustainable future. But, if we look at the subject from the environment part of view, we can see that the biggest part of the responsibility for the global warming which threatens the future of the world belongs to the Carbon Dioxide emissions from the BUILDINGS! Therefore precautions have to be taken in building design and engineering. The schools of architecture have to renew their teaching curriculum and they have to purify their approach to designers which has become egocentric in 20 the century modernism. This egocentric designer

understanding needs to be replaced by the priority of the natural givens both in the design process of architecture and urban issues.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Meltem Yilmaz
Hacettepe University
Ankara Turkey

Kodakkal Shivaprasad, India.

PART-I:

Subject: What are the main barriers in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e. economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in implementing these strategies?

Reply: ECONOMIC GROWTH: Now a days each countries facing financial crisis due to lack of planning and development strategies across their nation. In line of this sloe or down-writhing by economical condition in each nation is common, however it may resolved with discussion like this stage at UNDP. However efforts in reaching economical growth is in motivation but due to several political handlings it was not in proper and was fighting each one, thereby resulting in fall downing the respective political party with governments and their economic plans, should harmfully effect in nation's slove /downtrodden motivations towards achieving economically upgrading. Several suggestions we can put together to reaching the economical upgrading a nation. To get enforcing in achieving a real goal it's better to introduce following strategy to earmark the economic progress. Implementing more to more attractive benefits in productive units like agriculture, plantations is our basic or first attention I time being. So that agriculture is the main bone of a nation and without agricultural productive or useful plans towards economic growth we are not in a position to set-up any linked programmed like industries, small-scale industries or other allied sector/products like animal husbandries, apiculture, saplings, large or small-scale industries around a nation. Therefore it may be aware that to establish an well-planned progressive method to developing the agricultural productive like farming, forestry and to introduce some special schemes in a newly systems with back-bone of the agriculture workers so called farmers, so that agriculture projects can get together by growing more to more yields at all levels. However using more to more mechanical & chemical methods in agricultural system is not an appraisal for the time being. As the mechanical system is only for get speedy with capable for image building and not able to maintain any fruitful gains but should able in reducing the manpower. It also shows our inability in maintain un-employment free place with rural youth and thereby it results in vacating every villagers with regard to search/locate for employment opportunity in city level. Therefore city based life is not easy in now a days as unemployed youths vacated from villages due to mechanism at agriculture fields, most of cities crowded in full. Hence we constrained to note here that systems with mechanical aspects are the main reason for falling in manpower like un-employment problems. However chemical usages in agricultural plantation can lead in to slow poisons for soil thereby resulting in human healthy conditions be stabled. However handmade or natural products like cow-treads or other allied products like saplings, pesticides be well used in ancient time, herby getting well equipped economically growing in day to day goals.

Therefore it needless to say here that without proper plan to setup a development project for agriculture, one nation can not set it's own goals with regard to economic growth.

Second one is industrial products that we have not capable to face any risks like man-power but due to lack in allied production in agricultural fields we can expect any developments in industrial focus, so that to establish an industry friendly is our basic needs at the time being. We are sure we can achieve the growing percentage by releasing the subsequent benefits to the main streams like agriculture products thereby expecting higher growth at all levels.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Social Development is reflection of our humanity towards a progressive thinking and was able to maintain productive method to a nation at society. We can see several social development aspects like: [a] upgrading a human life. [b] to establish an user friendly or accessibilities to disabled peoples like crippled, hearing impaired, mental retarded, blind and finally other allied weaker section of society. [c] To build an vibrant & economical growing nation etc are the main stream of an social development aspect. To achieve in getting economical growth in a person is also shows our attitude towards socio-economic interests thereby reducing unemployment criteria across the world, thereby improving the living condition of the nation so that we are in a real way to reach the subsequent goals at a time being. In ancient culture we have failed to establish an friendly attitude with weaker section like disabled people especially physically challenged community thereby facing critical condition one who's family resulting in fall down the sociability at a society and thereby to a nation. However with a progressive and rationalize mind power we able to have several socio-economic projects by setting up several training centers, job oriented courses, job reservations and other allied economic projects like releasing old-age pensions, disability pensions, subsidized loans, concessions for several basic need like starveling, transporting, education, training etc. So that establishing an socio-economic projects like concessions, subsidies, interest free loan are being capable a helping hand to an disabled communities thereby resulting in securing goal of a social development movements around a nation. It also informs here that to establish sociability atmosphere, we are sure more NGO, trying their level best in up-keeping the socio-economic growth across the country. But due to lack in support for reasonability each NGOs are facing political back-grounds thereby reducing their projects, capability towards social development projects. Setting up educational institution is a really good sense for gaining social development programme, however now a days we lost faith in educational institutions as most of educational institutions having business ideas like collecting donations, fee structure etc, hence poor and economical backward communities are far behind with education and was in trouble in entering at higher educations like medical, engineering, science, technology etc. So that socio-economic friendly was not in expect progressive level, it also learnt from the well know sources.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION: As the health condition of a human being can be protected with environmental equipped area like pollution free zones etc. With maintain green forestry, plantations, road by saplings in each state, each district, each city we can expect the environment protected zones, be it briefed here that each state be friendly in upgrading forestry, and to maintain plantation growing movements in all corners of a nation. There by establishing a movement for road side sapling programme, so that roads can be reduced with carbon monoxides that have capable catching in motor vehicles like train, bus, car or other heavy vehicles. However environment can be see in industrial suburban areas as several factories are handling the bad-gas or dust things to the atmosphere, so that entire atmosphere in that capable area be facing environments with bad smells and reflecting in health condition of a society above the area. However movement for environment free-zone was in progress, as a thinking behavior we can see the gas related energy systems in lien of petroleum products and it also reducing the slow poisoning of a forestry, sapling grades etc so that certain saplings, trees at road sides, forest were protected by modern methods of environmental achieve. Needless to write here that we are in beginner to set our goal in achieving environment free zones like keeping 'CLEAN' and 'STEADY' area in each village, city and thereby a nation. Some city having a slogans displaying

in sign boards like 'CLEAN YOUR CITY' about awareness among public, so that it shows each one's movement towards achieving the real goal at a reasonable time being. To maintain dust free area in a establishment or a city town is our motto so that we can get our real goals in a single ways like this. Till day some city, villages have not maintaining toilet building and several villagers doing their day to today functions at empty places of a village or city. This also shows our failure in responsibility towards environment free zones so that poverty line can be a platform for such environment zones in several villages, however progressive thinking is in motivation, we can achieve the goals in environmental at a reasonable time by giving our efforts in reducing the bad dust, bad smell areas in a village, town, city and thereby a nation.

2. HOW CAN VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS LIKE THE NSDS, PRSP, UNDAF etc PROMOTE INTEGRATION OF THE THREE PILLARS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.?

With an reliable thing ideas over the projected roots by setting their goals with available support at NSDS, PRSP, UNDAF will be main points for reading the sustainable development programme. However each country having their responsibility in gaining the support & recognition for their developmental projects. It was not briefed in any manner with regard to what about in strengthening project. However awareness more about the reality in the genuineness of a developmental programme is must in every stage at sustainable projects. However to understandings with each other by nation to nation and by organization [NGO] to NGO can get an able administration goals in building each country's capacity in each project. To encourage brain-storm to achieve goals at respective social developed skills is the first attention in building these endeavors. However nowadays discouraging each one is all walks of life are in motivation it shows some one's interested behavior attitude with regard to sustainable development. So, we suggest here that to avoid this unpleasant aspect, we largely popularize the basic necessity in encouraging social development skills at all times.

3. HOW CAN WE SUPPORT COUNTRIES EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THE GOOD PRACTICES OF THOSE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN PURSUING THE GOAL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

We can support each countries for their enlistment towards sustainable developments through the resource and releasing available benefits like funds, concessions, international awards, international recognizing and to enrolling each country with UNDP progressive membership lists etc, so that each country can able to get an automatic support in their developmental projects at their respective state or nation. However some countries needs huge funds with regard to set-up planning commission in their developmental areas as the project was towards sustainable development hence without monetary ceilings/funds each country can be failed to contribute their achievements at a reasonable time or in a progressive roles. So that it's the duty of responsible/recognized UNITED NATION to encourage with announcing an integrated rural development project funds to each nation towards their achievement in building sustainable development project. However, the support with each one of the people is also noteworthy in building any sustainable development programme, as the back-bone of the programme was democracy and people, we can get together in reaching the goal in a single window also. However, UNITED NATION should act as observer, invigilator, well-wisher and finally the administrator with regard to released projects that have sustainable development programmes with each countries around the world. Together we Can! is a sentence that encourage in every aspects towards setting a reliable and reasonable goals, so that we able to recognize our valuable achievements with whole the world. Someone thinking about fund raising is best to achieve towards the goal for sustainable development, so that money can do anything. But we realize

here that money is not enough but an whole hearted support with rich minded peoples are the main back-bone to one and all projects with related to UNDP and we conclude here that we are the proud owners of each countries developments towards sustainability.

Kodakkal Shivaprasad
Shimoga District Physically Handicapped Welfare Sangha [Regd]
General Secretary
'Shivanaga' Ist Cross, Ist 'B' Parrellel,
Gundappashed,
SHIMOGA - 577 201
KARNATAKA STATE : INDIA.

Dated: February 12, 2008

R.J. Onno Gaanderse, City of Ottawa, Canada

RE: What is needed to drive further positive change towards sustainable development? At country and global level

Dear friends,

I believe there are three fundamental issues that will help drive positive change towards SD:

1. Strong leadership
2. Enabling SD implementation strategies at the appropriate levels
3. Optimistic patience for incremental generational change through education.

Strong leadership

The issue of political will is key to the eventual success of SD. We must educate, or elect political leaders who will ignore the loud voices of polarized and parochial interest groups, and who will make the right SD decision for their country, region, and world. Our political leaders must learn to honour commitments made on behalf of the country by previous governments, and not let political party differences drive national environmental agendas. We as a civil society must make it clear to our political leaders that we expect them to accept long-term decisions made by a previous government for the greater good, and to carry on with the implementation of the designated programs related to those decisions.

Enabling SD implementation strategies

We all must take the Rio and subsequent declarations to heart and “think globally and act locally” by enabling lower-level governments to implement sustainable development strategies and initiatives. The majority of sustainable initiatives are carried out at the local level by local governments, impacting on the local populations. Since many of the SD initiatives require extensive funding for both start-up and long-term commitments (i.e. alternative waste management, public transit, energy efficiencies, water and waste water management, planning/zoning initiatives, green buildings and construction, green procurement, education and health etc.) the national governments need to make sufficient resources available to the local governments to realize those SD expectations.

Incremental generational change

Above all we need to develop a sense of optimistic patience. I am beginning to believe that my generation (I am 60) has offered two major contributions to the sustainability issue. First, we have identified the looming world-wide environmental crises. While we have initiated discussions at many levels, and have begun to make commitments and treaties to address some of the major issues such as climate change, we have not (yet) been very successful on the implementation side of things. However, and this is where the second contribution comes into play, we have initiated a "new" field of study for our younger generations. Already there are a burgeoning number of post secondary institutions that offer environmental-based courses of study at the technical, Bachelor's, Master's and PhD. levels. As well, there are an increasing number of teachers at the elementary and secondary levels who are incorporating SD principles into their science, geography, language, maths and other classes. In this way our younger generation(s) are building a knowledge base and philosophical approach to sustainability-related issues.

Since sustainable development is as much a social issue as a financial and environmental issue, I believe that success will be based on incremental generational changes. These changes will be driven by experiential needs and successes (as the world's health demonstrably changes for both better and worse) and better informed/educated young people who will become the leaders of the future willing to accept the responsibility and burden to make the right decisions.

Regards,

Onno

R.J. Onno Gaanderse

Environmental Planner

Ottawa, Canada

Michel Allaire, Québec, Canada

1 What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

Although we keep hearing about "breaking the silos", "partnerships" and other management school buzzwords, time has shown that successful initiatives are focused on a single issue (or a few related ones) and implemented by relevant stakeholders. The success of the Montreal Protocole on Ozone-depleting substances and its dedicated financial tool is one such successful environmental initiative. Today's world is highly complex. No one can be a social, economic and environmental specialist. Some cities, countries and corporations have adopted SD plans after completing intense planning, consultation and consensus-building processes. Environmental departments, based on environmental concerns, often develop those plans and have to convince the other departments to get involved. "Finance" and "social" also have objectives and targets they need to meet in order to reduce the negative impacts of their operations. Common goals have to be "negotiated" among EVERY high-level executives or stakeholders and some basic objectives will describe development goals. From these common development goals, specific departments then implement targeted actions. It is important at this point that experts deal with specific issues within their respective fields. Everyone-involved-in-everything makes no one responsible!

Such a common action plan, once adopted at the highest level, commands commitment from everyone involved. Players then play the game or sit on the bench! Commitments to implement less popular actions, actions requiring extra-efforts, as much as easy, popular and rewarding ones are mandatory. Communicating successes from short-term actions will maintain momentum and stimulate efforts required to deal with longer-term issues. From this point, consistency becomes

the key issue. As soon as a department's decision is considered "non-sustainable", interest drops. Winning it back is costly. For example, an organization operating according to an Environmental Management System, an SD plan, reporting CSR and triple-bottom-line, etc., loses "green capital" when it decides to move from a downtown core to a suburb, into a new building, on a newly-developed site (requiring infrastructure additions), making public transportation difficult for everyone. Lack of consistency feeds the skeptical and kills the best-intended ideas.

A population's biological, social and economic basic needs have to be met. Emerging economies populations aspire to improve their quality of life, to live in decent and safe neighborhoods and to have access to modern and efficient transportation. Higher education and economic prosperity help overcome barriers set by ancestral religious beliefs, sometimes responsible for perpetuating violent behaviors, uncontrolled population growth and gender inequity. Education also provides better judgment on governance issues (dictatorships, corruption, etc.) and public policies. Basic ingredients are required before starting a recipe! No one can expect others will be told how and when to develop without consequences. Telling others not to repeat mistakes does not work on a family basis, never mind within countries or corporations.

2. How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level?

Sustainable development is a development issue; much larger than its environmental component. Environmental authorities, NGOs and other environmental stakeholders need to participate in co-operation with others from the other two pillars. Confusion between environment and sustainable development must be dissipated. Development authorities have to integrate SD in every action; not once every so often. Development instruments need to be consistent with one another. Of course, poverty reduction policies are based on economic growth principles. Social and environment impacts of economic actions have to be made available to teams working on a poverty reduction strategy so such issues can be integrated and balanced by economic covenants. Targets and expectations need to be negotiated among the three pillars representatives.

Once adopted, SD principles need to be implemented deep into daily operations in order to survive government/high executive changes. Putting up a sustainable development strategy implies that every decision within the entire organization is consistent with the common goals while minimizing keeping negative impacts on social, economic and environmental issues as low as possible.

3. How can our organizations and each of us most effectively support countries in leaning from the practices of those countries that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development?

Implementing agencies are key in co-operation with national agencies willing to share specific success stories. Capacity-building activities have to address the "learner's needs"; not because one wants to share its success stories (and promote its own economic development). Everyone is unique. Everyone is convinced that problems they encounter are unique. Capacity-building, lessons-learned and other sharing experiences are successful when based on very closely related issues or through a relationship.

Finally, beware of missions and visions stating that operations are based on sustainability principles. Look further. Look deeper. Green washing is very popular and highly fashionable!

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Jan Roberts, President Earth Charter U.S.

"What is needed to drive further positive change towards sustainable development? At country and global level.

I believe that connecting communities and their efforts would be helpful in driving positive change nationally and even internationally. I would like to let you know that Earth Charter U.S. is underwriting the web technology and doing the coordinating for Climate Change Community Summits in at least 50 cities globally on October 11, 2008--International Year of Planet Earth. We will also underwrite the web connection for a year after the Summits for communities to interact monthly on good practices and what they are doing. I'd be happy to share more information if anybody in the e-Discussion is interested in being involved.

I hope this is a bit helpful.

Jan Roberts
President
Earth Charter U.S.

Benedict Osakwe Odigwe, Saima Nigeria Limited, Nigeria

Dear All,

Once again, we should and must come to realise the fact that national strategies for sustainable development is the pivot and brain box to any meaningful sustainable development. Development progress over the past thirty years has been unprecedented. Life expectancy in developing countries has risen by more than 25 years. Food production and consumption have increased around 20% faster than population growth. Improvements in health and education, have exceeded the performance of industrialised countries, infant mortality rates has been halved. Despite these remarkable progresses, there remain many complex trends and urgent challenges for sustainable development. These challenges must be faced by local, national and global institutional systems. The challenge for strategies for sustainable development is to determine which issues are best addressed at which level, ensure coherence between policy options pursued at different levels, and find ways of keeping local people involved where the policy agenda is best addressed at the national or international level.

Basic key challenges to sustainable development in developing countries are:

1. Marginalisation: Many countries are struggling under the combined weight of slow economic growth, a heavy external debt burden, corruption, violent conflict, and food insecurity, as well as

suffering from actions in pollution causing global warming are all barriers to sustainable development.

2. HIV-AIDS AND MALARIA: are particularly serious diseases which erode the productive capacity and social fabric of nations in most countries which are worst affected, HIV has already had a profound impact on existing rates of infant, child and maternal mortality.

3. Population Growth: it should be noted that 97% of the estimated increase of 2 billion people over the next twenty years will live in the developing world, hence, it is people's consumption levels that matter more than their mere numbers.

4. Governmental Instability: leads to violent conflict which hinders socio-economic progress in many countries and regions. Growing inequality of income, ethnic marginalisation, all contribute to instability.

5. Poverty, especially in developing countries still ravages the lives of one out of every five persons in the developing world. The social ills associated with poverty, including diseases, family breakdown, crime, and the use of narcotic drugs, are on the rise in many countries.

Having said these, we must come to terms with strategies and steps in alleviating or eradicating these inhibiting factors to sustainable development. Which are diverse but to mention a few?

1. Activities to generate learning and ownership of goods and services.
2. A mechanism to pursue the objectives of information system; budgeting, monitoring, and accountability.
3. Principles and standards to be adopted by sectors and stakeholders, through legislations, voluntary action, and market-based instruments.
4. Consistent stakeholder fora and means for negotiation at national and decentralised levels, with links between them.

Best Regards,

Benedict Osakwe Odigwe. - UNITAR POCI (ELAP STUDENT)

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Dze Nguesse Guy Antoine, Chairman of CICREQ, Cameroon

English Translation Follow

Chers tous,

Je voudrai remercier le modérateur de nous permettre de donner nos différents points de vue sur les questions de développement durable. Permettez-moi de souligner tout de suite que tout développement n'est possible que s'il intègre les trois axes de développement à savoir : La croissance économique, le développement social et la protection de l'environnement. L'Afrique doit se sentir le plus consternée ; tant il est vrai que l'Afrique est le continent qui court vers la croissance. Mais le véritable frein au développement durable en Afrique est la paix et la stabilité : facteurs sans lequel tout développement est éphémère.

Prenons l'exemple du Tchad un pays qui vient rentrer dans le cercle fermé des producteurs de pétrole. Il y a quelque jours une guerre fratricide de quelques jours à détruit les infrastructures construites pour la durée et pour un développement durable de ce pays. C'est un problème important qui doit être pris en compte comme frein pour atteindre les objectifs du millénaire pour un développement durable. Mais qui peut être à l'origine de cela ?

1) Les Dirigeants

Tous les chefs d'états Africain veulent mourir au pouvoir parce qu'ils ne veulent pas d'alternance. En dehors de quelques pays comme le Sénégal, le Mali, la Ghana où on note une volonté d'alternance de pouvoir et dont on a pu noter une croissance économique considérable ces dernières années, les autres pays ont du mal à décoller leurs économies.

2) Le Populations Citoyennes

La pauvreté et la corruption empêchent les citoyens de faire des votes sanctions. Il suffit de quelques sacs de riz et de quelques billets de banque pour que les votants basculent d'un côté comme de l'autre. Pas de vote conviction mais de vote pour manger.

3) Les Organisations Internationales Et Les Pays Developpes

Tous les pays en développement font des efforts pour des besoins d'aide, d'intégrer la croissance économique, le développement social et la protection de l'environnement dans leur projet de développement. Mais une fois les aides octroyées les bailleurs n'assurent pas le suivie de la gestion de ces fonds mis à leur disposition. Pourtant ils savent bien l'état de corruption et de détournement des deniers publics qui règnent dans ces pays. Sans se mêler de souveraineté d'un pays, nous pensons qu'un suivi des dépenses est nécessaire pour la bonne gestion desdits fonds.

Une fois le problème de paix résolu, nous sommes d'accord avec le Dr. Joseph A. Giacalone (Professeur d'économie St. John's University, New York) que la croissance économique est la condition préalable pour les autres objectifs.

Sincères salutations,

English Version

Dear all,

I want to thank the moderator for allowing us to give our different perspectives on sustainable development issues. Let me emphasize first of all that any development is not possible unless it integrates all three axes of development namely: economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Africa should be the most concerned; as it is true that Africa is the continent which is moving towards growth. But the real obstacle to sustainable development in Africa is peace and stability: factors without which any development is temporary.

Take the example of a country like Chad that remains in the closed circle of oil exporters. A few days ago there was a fratricidal war of a few days, which destroyed infrastructure built to last and for the sustainable development of this country. This is an important issue which must be taken

into account as an obstacle to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. But what can be the cause?

1) The Leaders

All African heads of state want to die in power because they do not want alternation of power. Apart from a few countries such as Senegal, Mali and Ghana where there is willingness for change in power and where there has been considerable economic growth in recent years, other countries have had difficulty in having their economies take off.

2) Citizen Populations

Poverty and corruption prevent citizens from making protest votes against their leaders. Only a few bags of rice and some banknotes are enough to make voters switch from one side to another. This is not a vote of conviction, but a vote to eat.

3) International Organizations and Less Developed Countries

All developing countries are making efforts for the needs of aid, to integrate economic growth, social development and environmental protection into their development plans. But once the aid has been granted, the donors do not ensure the follow-up of the management of these funds made available to them. However they know very well the level of corruption and embezzlement of public funds that prevail in those countries. Without interfering in a country's sovereignty, we believe that tracking spending is necessary for the proper management of such funds.

Once the problem of peace is resolved, we agree with Dr. Joseph A. Giacalone (Professor of Economics, St. John's University, New York) that economic growth is the prerequisite for the other objectives.

Sincerely,

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Bruno Mupinganayi, CARI, Democratic Republic of Congo

English translation follows

1. What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

Les barrières principales pour la République Démocratique du Congo (RDC) qui empêchent l'intégration des objectifs de développement durable dans les stratégies de développement nationale sont :

- les guerres d'agression subies par le pays ces dix dernières années,
- le déficit de la volonté politique,

- l'absence de vulgarisation des OMD au niveau national,
- le refus des Agences Onusiennes accréditées en RDC à collaborer avec les ONG accréditées à L'ECOSOC à la poursuite en commun des OMD en marge de l'action de l'Etat.

2. How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level?

Les instruments tels que le National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) comportent les insuffisances qui gênent la réalisation du développement durable. Ces documents n'ont pas repris les paramètres comme la déliquescence de l'Etat, la gestion peu responsable des écosystèmes nationaux, les catastrophes naturelles, la disponibilité des moyens matériels et financiers et l'oubli des l'industrialisation du territoire.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) - ce document n'est pas connu du tout dans le milieu des décideurs congolais et dans ce cas ne pourra pas leur servir dans la réalisation des objectifs du développement durable.

3. How can our organizations and each of us most effectively support countries in leaning from the practices of those countries that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development?

Il est nécessaire qu'il y ait un partenariat systématique entre nos organisations, les agences de l'ONU et les gouvernants. Il faut disposer un financement suffisant pour vulgariser les objectifs de développement durable et faire le lobbying auprès des décideurs. Il faudra recycler les dirigeants et le public à la logique du développement durable au moyen des séminaires de formation et des émissions à la radio et à la télévision. Il faudra organiser un débat national sur les OMD et leur mise en œuvre.

English version

Dear all

1. What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

The main barriers for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to integrating sustainable development objectives into national development strategies are:

- The wars of aggression undergone by the country over the past ten years,
- Lack of political goodwill,
- Lack of awareness of the MDGs at the national level,
- The refusal of the accredited U.N. agencies in the DRC to collaborate with the NGOs accredited to ECOSOC in the joint pursuit of the MDGs at the margin of the state's activities.

2. How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level?

Instruments such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) are deficient in ways which obstruct the achievement of sustainable development. These documents have not included constraints such as, the dwindling power of the State, irresponsible management of national ecosystems, natural disasters, the unavailability of material and financial resources and the forgetting of the country's industrialization.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) – this document is not known at all among Congolese decision-makers and therefore cannot be useful to them in the achievement of sustainable development objectives.

3. How can our organizations and each of us most effectively support countries in leaning from the practices of those countries that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development?

There has to be a systematic partnership between our organizations, the UN agencies and those who govern. Sufficient financing must be provided to disseminate the objectives of sustainable development and to lobby decision-makers. It will be necessary to repeat to leaders and the public the logic of sustainable development via training seminars and radio and television programmes. A national debate should be organized on the MDGs and their implementation.

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Maison N/8, Petit Plateau, UNIKIN D.R. of Congo

Dated: February 13, 2008

Bashir Jama, UNDP New York

Dear all,

Let me also join this exciting discussion, and provide some insights (using Kenya as case study), on the barriers to integrating sustainable management of forests in Kenya.

About 3 years ago, there was a big debate in the country on how best to increase tree cover in the major watersheds of the country. The goal of the government was to increase land under forests to about 10%, up from under 2%. Much of the forests in the highlands were cut down through

logging (legal and illegal) and through expansive agriculture. The key questions the government and its development partners wanted answered by the research and development community were:

- a) What is the size of deforested areas? Fortunately, UNEP provided very useful GIS and remote sensed maps. The visual demonstration of chrono-sequenced maps, showing the extent of the destruction, was very helpful and was easily understood by the policy makers.
- b) What does the loss of so many forests mean in terms of water yield loss? Can trees on farms provide the same functions, assuming similar coverage? The answer to these questions was not straightforward. There was paucity of information on this water yield functions of forests compared with agricultural land use within the same agro-ecology. According to the government and policymakers, they have an obligation to settle the landless, and replacing one forest type with another (i.e., agro-forestry in the farmlands) should do the job. Getting this information from both local and international research programs in the country was not easy. Where some data was available, it was not processed and available in a form that could easily be communicated with the policymakers. It also became evident that capacity of the national research (both forestry and agriculture) needed to be strengthened to answer this landscape and policy level questions.
- c) How will reforestation with exotic species compared with indigenous ones affect water yield? Research again could not provide adequate answers. There was strong interest among farmers and private entrepreneurs to grow fast-growing species. Some of the policy makers encouraged this because the country was facing severe wood and timber shortages. Demand for wood was good, and the price was high. On the other hand, there were other stakeholders, including conservations groups that wanted only indigenous species planted in the watershed areas.

Decisions were eventually made, on zoning the plantings of exotics and indigenous, but this not necessarily evidence-based. The key lessons I gathered from this debate and discussions were:

There is an urgent need for the research community to understand and document the environmental service functions of forests and agricultural landscapes in a better way. Research on this area is weak. For this to happen there is a strong need to strengthen the R&D national research systems.

There is need to make available information to policy makers, and do so in ways that they can understand. The visual maps of UNEP are an example.

These interventions could help with decision making and perhaps enhance the integration of interventions that promote sustainable development into national policies and practices.

Cheers,

Bashir Jama
Policy Adviser
Agriculture and Rural Development
MDG Support Team
UNDP, New York.

Eric Belvaux, Secretariat of Convention on Biological Diversity

Dear all,

Please find another two contributions from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity which can be considered as inputs for the following question: “What have been the key success factors to integrating environmental goods and services in country’s economic systems?”

1. The principle 4 of the Ecosystem Approach and the work in incentive measures.

By adopting the Ecosystem Approach as an overarching framework for implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention recognized the need to understand and manage ecosystems in an economic context. This is so because the greatest threat to biodiversity arises through land use change, which is often driven through market distortions which undervalue natural systems and populations and provide perverse incentives and subsidies to favour the conversion of land to less diverse systems. Principle four of the Ecosystem Approach identifies the key success factors for ensuring that economic systems make provision for the economically valuable goods and services provided by ecosystems: (a) reduce those market distortions that adversely affect biodiversity; (b) align incentives to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use; (c) internalize costs and benefits in the given ecosystem to the extent feasible. The implementation guidelines to this principle inter alia call for the application of practicable economic valuation methodologies for ecosystem services, and for an evaluation of the direct as well as indirect economic benefits associated with good ecosystem management.

Concrete work to implement this principle is taking place under Article 11 of the Convention, on incentive measures. Indeed, the lack of economic incentive measures was identified by Parties in their third national reports as the highest challenge in ensuring the sustainable use of components of biodiversity (genes, species, and ecosystems) – which is one of the three main objectives of the Convention and a key element of sustainable development. In their practical implementation activities, the application of valuation tools was the single most important mechanism identified by Parties for the incorporation of (market and non-market) biodiversity values into relevant plans, policies and programmes, and other relevant areas. Many Parties also reported on the promotion of biodiversity-based goods and services, possibly in the context of participatory rural development projects or community-based natural resource management, with explicit references made in particular to tourism (including ecotourism), and to labelling and certification as a means to promote such products. Parties also reported on the application of positive incentive measures in particular in the agriculture and forestry sectors, including measures such as tax exemptions or tax credits, tariff reductions or duty-free concessions, subsidized credit, payment systems for ecosystem services, or benefit-sharing agreements with local communities, in particular in the context of protected areas management. As regards removal of perverse incentives, Parties again reported on progress made in particular in the agriculture and forestry sectors. According to Parties, the lack of financial, human, technical resources is the most important challenge in implementing incentive measures for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

2. Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) in Integrated Water Resources Management (IRWM)

Adopted by the Parties to the UN/ECE 92 Watercourse Convention at their fourth meeting (Bonn, 20-22 November 2006), the recommendations are a pioneering policy instrument, as they are the first example of international guidance on PES in IRWM not only at the local and national

levels but also at the trans-boundary level. Governments and other actors are encouraged to apply the recommendations according to their needs and conditions.

The main objective of these Recommendations is to provide guidance on the establishment and use of PES to implement IWRM through the promotion of the protection, restoration and sustainable use of water-related ecosystems. They are intended to provide guidance in the further implementation of the provisions of the UN/ECE 92 Convention and its related Protocols to prevent, control and reduce impacts, whether trans-boundary or not, on the environment, including human health and safety, taking into account biodiversity conservation and restoration. These Recommendations specifically intend to support the establishment of well-designed PES schemes and thereby to:

- (a) Raise awareness among all stakeholders, including landowners, land users and water users, of the benefits of using PES to protect, restore and sustainably use water-related ecosystems;
- (b) Improve the quality of, and facilitate the integration of, relevant policies at all levels and sectors pertaining, among other things, to agriculture and forestry, urban development, water, energy and transport, thereby promoting efficiency, effectiveness and equity;
- (c) Take into account of the value of ecosystems and contribute to the establishment of markets for ecosystem services; and
- (d) Broaden and diversify the financial basis for ecosystem protection, restoration and sustainable use.

The Recommendations also intend to improve the overall framework for the protection, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems and their services by present and future generations. They are an important contribution towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and more generally the recommendations of Agenda 21. They also contribute to achieving the goals of multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and promote synergies and interlink ages among them. More specifically, these recommendations are in general agreement with the principles of the ongoing work of the CBD on economics, trade and incentive measures, although specific guidance on PES has yet to be adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD. The development of such recommendations under the UN/ECE 92 Convention would appear to be relevant to, and might be considered by, ongoing processes under the CBD.

Therefore, PES recommendations are a great contribution of the UN/ECE 92 Convention to support CBD implementation and set an example of how the UN 97 Convention framework might be strengthened with regards to the need of enhancing Integrated Water Resources Management. For more information, see:

<http://www.unece.org/env/documents/2006/wat/ece.mp.wat.2006.5.e.pdf>

Best regards,

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Amadou Diop, the Rodale Institute, USA

Dear colleagues:

I found this discussion very useful. It is true that most of us have no hope that countries will reach the MDGs by 2015. There is a real need to shake up our governments to push them to do more, instead of relying too much on international aids. Recently the African governments have expressed their concerns that countries are not taking advantage of the NEPAD and the MCC programs because they are not able to produce good projects.

1. Main barriers:

- Achieving sustainable development goals requires a multi-disciplinary approach taking into consideration the social economical and environmental dimensions.
- Finding the most appropriate departmental ministry to coordinate the implementation of the national strategy for SD and lack of access to financial resources (for example in Senegal, funds were dedicated for sustainable development projects but not many people knew about them);
- Lack of good monitoring and evaluation systems: Governments are good in monitoring outputs but do not go deeper to assess socio-economic impacts of development projects.
- Development policies do not always reflect the national strategy for SD. Most governments in Africa recognize that agriculture is an engine for economic growth which is one of the pillars for sustainable development, yet there is a lack of political will and adequate funding from the national budgets. Most of the national research institutes are on a stand-by, waiting for foreign aid to refine their research and get it out to farmers via extension services and/or NGOs.

2. Instruments for development planning:

There should be an alignment of poverty reduction projects and other development projects with the goals of the national sustainable development strategies. There are cases when the designers and/or implementers of these projects do not understand enough or are not aware of these goals.

3. How can various organizations support countries?

Governments need to foster their partnership with NGOs (national and international) and other civil society organizations. Many NGO are actively involved in poverty reduction, sustainable development and/or environmental protection projects.

Best regards,

Makhtar Diop

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Dated: February 15, 2008

Adil Najam, Professor for Global Public Policy, Boston University

Dear facilitators and friends

Thank you for a very interesting and timely discussion.

The challenge has been, and remains, that sustainable development has not been able to evolve out of its 'environmentalist' roots. Of course, the environment is a central component of sustainable development. However, the environment has too often been seen and too often portrayed as the central core of the concept. This is not surprising, but it is unfortunate because this means that to the extent it is accepted it is accepted as an environmental concept.

It was not the "development people" who came up with the concept through a recognition of environment to development; it was the "environment people" (Brundtland onwards) who devised the idea as a way to get some buy-in from the development crowd, or, more precisely, from developing countries. The social aspect, although included, is often given short shrift by both the puritanical (growth-driven) developmentalists and the puritanical (nature-driven) environmentalists. This is probably a harsh thing to say and I understand that it is stylistic and certainly not true across the board. But I suspect it is true enough in enough instances to be generally true.

I think the last many years have seen a valiant and honest effort towards the integration of the three but conceptually even the effort towards integration may be disintegrating now. For the many reasons others have mentioned, growth seems to be again on everyone's mind. And especially with the current passions for climate change a lot of environmentalists seem ready to go it alone without having "development" pull their environmental passions down. Again, this is generally true but with many specific exceptions. But it does seem that the great focus on climate change (at the exact time when it should have become a mainstream development challenge) may be pulling the issue towards a "purer" environmentalist corner rather than the integrating sustainable development perspective.

Adil Najam

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Eric Belvaux, Programme Officer, Biodiversity for Development Unit

Dear all,

As a follow up of our first contribution to the part 1 of the ongoing e-Discussion, you will find below a second input from the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity more focused on how biodiversity considerations have been integrated at the country level through the existing framework (i.e. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and national reports).

Opinion poll on sectoral integration of biological diversity and development

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity has polled, through national reports, country opinions on sectoral integration of biological diversity and development in the past decade. The most recent poll has returns from 124 countries, both developed and developing. We have designed several indexes to measure overall status and trends based on the returns, and found that the results have direct relevance to the current discussions on integration issue.

National biodiversity strategies and action plans have already covered integration into all major sectors, though not in all sectors. Nevertheless, biological diversity has only been integrated into some sectors, not yet in major sectors. This signifies that we are in a new phase of sectoral integration, that is, moving from integrating social and economic sectors into national biodiversity strategies and action plans to integrating biological diversity into social and economic sectors. Policy changes are urgently required to enable the new phase of sectoral integration.

Overall, incentive measures, financial resources and access to genetic resources are the most challenging provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity for sectoral integration. These are followed by handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits, sustainable use, access to and transfer of technology, and invasive alien species. Integration challenges are less evident in the field of ex-situ conservation, public education and awareness, impact assessment and minimizing adverse impacts, protected areas and exchange of information. The level of challenges to various biome-based programmes falls in the range of medium to high, with the programme of work on forest biological diversity relatively lower, and the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity relatively higher.

Further features of the new phase of sectoral integration would include:

- Decision-making. Governments have integrated consideration of the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources into national decision-making in some relevant sectors, and are moving towards most relevant sectors.

- Conservation. Governments have identified and implemented some practical steps for improving the integration of protected areas into broader land and seascapes, including policy,

planning and other measures, and are moving towards identification and implementation of major steps.

- Sustainable use. Governments have integrated a few principles of the Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development in the development or review of national strategies and plans for tourism development, national biodiversity strategies and actions plans, and other related sectoral strategies, but are largely still at the planning stage.

- Education. There is a high level of affirmative responses indicating support being provided to initiatives by major groups, key actors and stakeholders that integrate biological diversity conservation matters in their practice and education programmes.

- International initiatives. Governments are moving towards concrete actions to review and further integrate biodiversity considerations in the development and implementation of some international development initiatives, as well as in some national sustainable development plans and relevant sectoral policies and plans, but still lag behind in major initiatives and plans.

- Development cooperation. Governments are moving towards enhancing the integration of biological diversity into some sectoral development and assistance programmes, but still far from integrating into major sectoral development and assistance programmes.

It should be noted that the level of sectoral integration normally remains the same across major policy documents. In the case of the programme of work on inland waters ecosystems, there is only a partial integration into national biodiversity strategies and action plans, wetland policies and strategies, integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans, but not implemented them.

Major integration tools are not equally utilized. There are some mainstreaming and integration on agricultural biological diversity, but largely at the stage of identifying potential frameworks and mechanisms. Assessment and planning are most popular measures for integration, and training and capacity building are less frequently used.

Despite the repeated general call for mutual integration, less than two thirds of Governments indicated that they have integrated actions under the programme of work of dry and sub-humid lands into its national biodiversity strategies and action plans or the National Action Programme (NAP) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

At the regional level, however, nearly four fifths of Governments are strengthening regional and subregional cooperation, enhancing integration and promoting synergies with relevant regional and subregional processes.

The aforementioned findings suggest that the goal of sectoral integration in biodiversity planning has been largely achieved under the biodiversity convention. The daunting task of sectoral integration is to integrate biological diversity into sectoral policies and plans, and this can not be effectively done through the convention process itself. Substantial integration efforts must be mobilized for major social economic sectors and eventually for all social economic sectors. And this is the area where we think the upcoming High-level Review can and must make a difference.

Eric BELVAUX
Programme Officer

Biodiversity for Development Unit

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Dated: February 16, 2008

Harvey W. Parker, Past President, International Tunneling and Underground Space Association (ITA)

I wish to bring to the attention of this eDiscussion, a different kind of solution to promote Sustainable Development. This solution is one seldom considered but should be added to those normally considered in our quest to provide sustainable development. On December 14, 2007 UN ECOSOC and the International Tunneling and Underground Space Association (ITA) conducted a joint UN-ITA Workshop titled “The Use of Underground Space as an Unexpected Solution for Promoting Sustainable Development.” The workshop was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Lebohang Fine Maema, Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN for the Republic of Lesotho. The Moderator was Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director of the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination. The workshop was organized by Mr. Sergei Kambalov, Chief, ECOSOC and Interorganizational Cooperation Branch.

A few conclusions from this workshop are contained below:

- 1) Society is not sustainable without infrastructure. Efforts to achieve sustainability must include action to provide all types of infrastructure including on the ground surface and underground.
- 2) It is impossible in major cities to provide the entire necessary infrastructure at the ground surface. Often the best infrastructure is provided by tunnels and underground space.
- 3) Underground space use offers benefits for all society, ranging from rural to megacities, for many aspects of quality of life, resource conservation, infrastructure expansion, and disaster prevention.
- 4) Tunnels bring clean water in and take wastewater out to promote health and sustainability worldwide, particularly in developing countries and megacities (MDG#6).
- 5) Underground space use is generally energy efficient and conserves energy, thus promoting sustainable development and it is an ally in the fight against global warming (MDG#7). Underground temperatures average around fifty five degrees Fahrenheit (F) thereby requiring the use of less insulation and less energy (MDG#7).
- 6) Underground space is also important in rural areas, particularly in countries with harsh climates, for storage of foods and goods at a constant temperature of about 55 degrees F.

7) There are great benefits to society by the use of tunnels, microtunnels, and underground space for public use and bulk storage of water, fuel, and other goods in mega cities which allows for more efficient use of the ground surface (MDG#7).

8) Underground space provides safe havens during natural and man-made hazards including from earthquakes. Underground structures are subject to less stress and run a much lower risk of damage in earthquakes, in wind storms, and from violence (MDG#7).

9) Durability and long life of underground spaces can result in reasonable life-cycle costs as they exceed the life-span of most types of infrastructure (MDG#7). Tunnels and underground space are investments, not costs. The indirect benefits are also enormous; Sao Paulo estimates the overall aggregate savings to society just from their underground metro to be over \$1B USD per year.

10) Use of underground space allows multiple use of land as well as preservation of natural beauty & archeology (including World Heritage Sites) by proper planning of underground space, transfer of technologies, and training (MDG#7 & MDG#8). Land ownership at several layers increases land use and provides more usable space. So many countries, especially Japan and China, not only have strongly embraced the use of underground space but are quickly constructing much underground space for the benefit of their citizens.

11) It is urgent to become aware of the benefits of underground space and to plan the underground space use of your region or city or else the enormous potential sustainable development benefits of underground space will be lost. In fact, there are significant differences among countries in the legal aspects of who owns underground space, private or public interests. Many Western megacities are now paying the price for not properly planning and managing the use of underground space. So society can not afford not to consider the use of underground space.

12) The use of underground space can be beneficial in a world struggling to cope with the effects of climate change and sustainable development.

These unexpected solutions in the promotion of sustainable development are, of course, in addition to the traditional solutions but are important and are presented to this eDiscussion for your consideration and comments.

Harvey W. Parker, Past President
International Tunneling and Underground Space Association (ITA)
NGO in Special Consultative Status

André Francisco Pilon, Associate Professor Faculty of Public Health, University of São Paulo

The Bubbles or the Boiling Pot

Problems

Quality of life, natural and man-made environments, physical, social and mental well-being are currently undermined by all sorts of hazards and injuries; political, economical, social and cultural disarray normalise atrocious behaviours and violence throughout the world; in a context of dehumanisation, depersonalisation and reification. Definition of problems are segmented and reduced by public policies, academic formats, mass-media headlines, market-places interests and common sense prejudices. Justice, ethics, social equity, education, culture, public health, natural and man-made environments are impaired, human values that took centuries to develop are demolished.

Conceptual Approach

Instead of repairing situations to make them straight", dealing with the bubbles of the surface (taken for granted problems) and misrepresenting or ignoring the real issues inside the boiling pot", a multidimensional theoretical and practical ecosystemic approach and planning model deals with the dynamic and complex configurations that make up reality, intertwining, as donors and recipients, four dimensions of being-in-the-world: intimate (subjects cognitive and affective processes), interactive (groups mutual support and values), social (political, economical and cultural systems) and biophysical (biological endowment, natural and man-made environments).

Methodology

Instead of an exploratory forecasting (projecting into the future the trends of today), a normative forecasting is posited (previous definition of desirable goals and probing new paths to reach them). Problems of difficult settlement or solution are assessed in different contexts and settings (micro, meso and macro) as expressions of the interplay of dynamic configurations encompassing the different dimensions of being-in-the-world, as they induce the events (deficits and assets), cope with consequences (desired or undesired) and contribute for change (diagnosis and prognosis). The methodology is participatory, experiential and reflexive, heuristic-hermeneutic processes in the socio-cultural learning niches unveil connections and ruptures between the different dimensions that originate the problems, cultural and epistemic paradigms and subject-object relationships are investigated as people reflect on their own realities, engage in new experiences and explore new ways to live in the world in view of this ecosystemic approach:

Results

New paradigms of growth, power, wealth, work and freedom and consequent economic, social, political, cultural and educational changes are associated with new ways for being in the world. Individuals, groups, society, natural and man-made environments are simultaneously developed in view of the balance of the four dimensions of being-in-the-world. Development projects promote the singularity of each dimension and the balance between them, articulating culture, education, communication, environment, health and quality of life, achieved as by-products and objectives of an ecosystemic model of culture (opposite to the current non-ecosystemic model).

Research Findings

Natural and man-made environments; public policies, education, ethics, human rights, physical, social and mental well-being are strongly affected by the prevailing models of culture. The circumstances that affect individuals, groups, society, natural and man-made environments depend on each other and must be dealt with simultaneously in view of the dimensions

singularities and mutual balance. The development of the singularity and reciprocity of the four dimensions of being-in-the-world, strengthening the connections and sealing the ruptures between them is paramount to develop an ecosystemic model of culture.

Policy Lessons

Planning, development and evaluation of public policies, community building projects, research and teaching programmes must encompass the four dimensions of being-in-the-world. Education, culture, ethics, physical, social and mental well-being, natural and man-made environments are by-products and prosper with the development of an ecosystemic model of culture. Fragmented public policies, segmented approaches and conceptual reductions of the definition of problems are discontinued within the ecosystemic approach. New concepts of growth, power, wealth, work and freedom must be implemented to face the current economic, social, political, cultural, educational and environmental disarray.

André Francisco Pilon

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For the full text of my Ecosystemic Proposal please see:

[http://www.comminit.com/files/Pilon_%20A_%20F_%20Consolidated%20Version\[1\].doc](http://www.comminit.com/files/Pilon_%20A_%20F_%20Consolidated%20Version[1].doc)

Dr. J. G. Ray, Reader & Director of Environment Studies, India

Dear All,

Let me also join the second phase of the current discussion. I hope it would be more systematic if the views are expressed as answers to the questions provided. The following are my personal views.

1) What are the experiences of countries where SD strategies have been adopted?

In order to achieve sustainable development, people of any society need qualities such as belief in truth, love for nature, universal brotherhood, simple life style and the basic wisdom to consider humans as part of nature. Actually these are the accepted basic virtues of humans all over the world. In one way or another, descriptions of such principles are found in the religious scriptures of all the ancient civilizations of the globe.

Mahathma Gandhi, the founder of free India was a leader who had realized the potentials of the principles of religion in the political progress and sustainable development of a nation. He was much influenced by the Christian teachings as well. It was he who applied religious principles at large in organizing people towards a democratic free society.

He wanted to build India as a non-violent and sustainable nation. In 'Gandhian Politics' and 'Gandhian Economic concepts' one may find some unique principles of sustainable development. Gandhian concept of 'Sarvodaya' very well explains the concept of sustainable development.

Mahatma Gandhi upheld the importance of simple life style and importance of universal brotherhood (principles of non-violence) in societal existence.

According to him, true independence of a nation is in the independence of local societies – the villages. He advocated people to make themselves everything for their livelihood and sustenance ('Svasraya' and 'Svadeshi movements), and sell the excess to others with a charitable outlook.

However, these principles of Mahatma Gandhi (Gandhism) were viewed as a mere idealism and by and large, politicians in this country followed the western pragmatism (opportunism – opportunistic politics and economic development) in the development of modern Indian societies. All the governments which run the country after independence followed such consumerist principles of development; but Gandhism was not neglected completely, at least in principles. (As a result, though all troubles of 'modern unsustainable development' found elsewhere in the world are found dominating in Indian systems; but there is the ray of hope for revival and reclamations as well. But the country is lacking the required economic capital and political will to apply technology to combat pollution and environmental degradations.)

2) To what extent the key elements of these strategies have been reflected in the development frameworks and national budgets? What were the major hurdles and how were they tackled?

The basic political requirement, which is perhaps the corner stone for sustainable development – the democratic set up and the strong belief in democracy – are found in India. All efforts of population control and poverty eradications helped the country towards sustainable development.

Lack of a political will and the prevalence of environmental illiteracy are the major hurdles. But the advantages include allocation of at least some funds for environmental researches and education in the country. Availability of pollution abatement and environment friendly technologies to certain extent is also a positive aspect.

3) What have been the key success factors to integrating environmental goods and services in your country's economic systems? (For example, payment for protecting a watershed linked to water user fees)

Factors to integrate environmental goods and services are quite negligible in Indian economic systems. What is needed to drive further positive change towards sustainable development? At country and global level.

This is a Herculean task. What do we need at the country and global is really an awakening of the global and local society. All people have to learn the basic principles of human virtues. People need to work towards the sustenance of a welfare society. Belief in democracy and universal brotherhood is inevitable.

People shall be given more incentive to plant and to keep trees in their private as well as public lands.

There shall be global efforts to teach vegetarianism as a model and sustainable food habit. Moreover, less of per capita energy consumption and higher hygiene and health standards (less of systemic diseases such as cancers) shall be important criteria for economic development.

All countries have to find economic capital and political will to find more resources for further researches in eco-technologies, improving environmental literacy of people and to apply environmental technologies to stop pollutions and degradations. Global cooperation and support

are essential in this regard. There shall be a global effort to spread and sustain democracy in all types of societal existence – at local, national and global levels.

Thanking you all,

Dr J. G. Ray

Reader & Director of Environment Studies, St Berchmans College Changanacherry, Kerala, India.

(Full Member of the Ukrainian Academy of Ecological Sciences).

Noura Fatchima Djibrilla, Geographer, Coordinator of the Niger Environment Scouts Association, Nigeria

English Translation Follows

Bonjour,

Je vous envoie ci-dessus ma contribution.

1. What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?
2. How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level?
3. How can our organizations and each of us most effectively support countries in learning from the practices of those countries that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development?

Pour un développement durable, il faut qu'il y'ai celui du secteur rural pour nos genre de pays qui ont plus de 84 pour cent de population qui vivent de l'agriculture, en complément de toutes les opportunités, nous préconisons le développement des activités génératrices de revenus en milieu rural, à travers notamment la transformation et la commercialisation des produits agropastoraux, qui sont susceptibles d'améliorer et d'accroître sensiblement le revenu des populations rurales, en particulier les femmes.

Il y a lieu que la communauté internationale soutienne plus les pays pauvres qui luttent au quotidien pour assurer leur survie, en procédant à l'identification des canaux pour lutter contre cette pauvreté, à travers des pratiques jugées bonnes et novatrices.

Il faudrait aussi que la communauté internationale aide les pays les moins avancée à mettre en œuvre les différentes stratégies qu'ils ont élaboré comme:

- les stratégies de développement de l'irrigation et de la collette des eaux de ruissellement ;
- la stratégie de développement de la micro finance ;

- le plan d'action national de lutte contre la désertification et de gestion des ressources naturelles (PAN/LCD/GRN) qui est un des volets de l'agenda 21;
- le document des stratégies du développement rural (SDR).

Lutter contre la corruption qui gangrène nos sociétés, surtout dans les pays pauvres. Mais avant cela, il faut lutter contre la pauvreté, car c'est elle qui est à la base de la corruption. Pour un pays comme le Niger où 63% de la population, soient deux (2) nigériens sur trois (3) vivent en dessous du seuil de pauvreté et 34% de ces 63% soit une (1) personne sur trois (3) vit en dessous du seuil d'extrême pauvreté, il n'est pas facile pour ces gens qui cherchent à manger de leur parler de lutte contre la corruption, car ne dit on pas « que ventre affamé n'a point d'oreille » ?

Comme vous le constatez, la situation des populations pauvres n'est pas n'est pas luisante au Niger, comme dans la majorité des pays les moins avancés. Malgré les efforts de l'Etat, des partenaires au développement des ONG, et de la société civile, la situation demeure préoccupante. De ce fait, il y a lieu de soutenir davantage les actions déjà engagées tout en privilégiant la synergie, pour remédier au renversement de la tendance, c'est-à-dire réduire la pauvreté, tout en aidant à l'accroissement économique des pauvres, à travers des politiques équitables.

En ce qui concerne la protection de l'environnement, il faut aussi :

- mettre en place un corps de jeunes pour l'environnement, car la pauvreté est l'une des causes de la dégradation de l'environnement, car c'est elle qui entraîne les populations à se rabattre sur les ressources naturelles en se mettant à découper des arbres dans le but de se procurer des revenus (90 % de l'énergie consommée au Niger provient du bois), tout en accentuant la désertification.
- mettre en place un mécanisme de mobilisation des ressources ;
- identifier et mettre en œuvre des activités de lutte contre la désertification et de gestion des ressources naturelles ;
- identifier et mettre en œuvre en milieu urbain des activités de gestion de l'environnement dans une perspective de création d'emplois durable pour les jeunes ;

Il faut procéder à des échanges d'expériences entre les pays du nord et ceux du sud, et aussi entre les pays du sud entre eux, afin que ceux qui sont en avance puissent aider les autres en vue de l'atteinte des O M D et du développement durable.

English Translation

Hello,

Please see below my contributions.

For sustainable development, the rural development sector is most important for countries like ours where more than 84% of the population depends on agriculture for their livelihoods. In addition to other opportunities, we encourage the development of revenue generative activities in the rural sector, especially through the value addition and marketing of agro-pastoral products, able to improve the quality of and increase the revenue of the rural population, especially women.

The international community should do more to support poor countries struggling on a daily basis for survival by identifying channels to combat poverty through innovation and good practice.

The international community should also help LDCs implement strategies they have developed, including strategies on irrigation development and water harvesting; strategies on micro-finance development, action plans against desertification and natural resource management, which is one of the pillars of Agenda 21, and rural development strategies documents.

Fighting corruption that stymies our societies, especially in poor countries is necessary. But, before this, we need to fight poverty because this is really what incites corruption. For a country like Niger, where 63% of the population, that is 2 out of 3 people, live under the poverty line and 34% of the 63%, 1 out of 3 people, live under the extreme poverty line, it is not easy for these people fighting to survive to talk about the fight against corruption, for the saying goes that he who is hungry cannot listen.

As you state, the situation of the poor is not glowing in Niger, as in a majority of LDCs. This remains the most urgent situation even despite efforts made by the state, development partners, NGOs and civil society. Because of this, it is important to support actions already in place, emphasizing synergies to remedy and reverse this trend, and reduce poverty while improving economic growth and enacting income distribution policies.

In terms of protecting the environment, we must also put in place a youth corps for the environment since poverty is one of the main causes for environment degradation, since it forces populations to have recourse to natural resources by cutting trees to increase revenues (90% of the energy consumed in Niger comes from fuel wood), which also accelerates desertification. A mechanism to mobilise resources needs to be in place; activities to prevent desertification and foster better management of natural resources should be identified and implemented; management and environment activities should be identified and implemented in urban areas to create sustainable employment for youth.

We need to continue exchanging experiences between north and south and also between south-south countries so that those who have advanced can help those farther behind to achieve the MDGs and sustainable development.

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Kathrine Raleigh, Coordinator, Barcelona Center for the Support of the Global Compact

Dear colleagues,

First, thank you for all for your valuable contributions to this e-discussion, and thank you to the organizers for making this forum possible.

I just want to take the opportunity to second Dr. J.G. Ray's affirmation that "the developmental crisis of modern humans is basically a moral and spiritual crisis as well". I couldn't agree more. Ultimately, the successful implementation of technical, political and economic strategies for

sustainable will depend on the personal motivations and values of those who will develop plans and those who will work to turn them into a reality of daily life. This seems obvious, but it points of a powerful force for change which has been somewhat overlooked in many high-level governance discussions. On the other hand, outside policy circuits the sustainability/spirituality debate is livening up and many are starting to take action. One recent example is the www.countingprayers.org initiative in support of MDG #1.

Another point I would like to address is the real and potential role of the global Corporate Citizenship movement in support of sustainable development. Over the past week, I have read a lot about mobilizing resources, integrating sustainable development priorities into social and economic sectors, the need to dramatically reduce levels of corruption, to generate political will, the need to make sustainable development profitable, the importance of keeping it on the political agenda, etc. In my opinion, none of these things will happen without an active, even proactive role, of leading businesses both locally and internationally.

So, how can we better engage the business community in sustainability efforts? While there is certainly no one-size-fits-all solution, the UN Global Compact should not be ignored in discussions such as this one, first and foremost because it is a UN-led initiative and multi-stakeholder forum which strives to catalyse actions in support of broader UN goals, such as the MDGs. With some 4,600 business participants and other stakeholders in 120 different countries, the UNGC is a uniquely global platform for Corporate Citizenship. In UNGC forums and dialogues, powerful multinational and national companies are challenging themselves and others to step up their efforts to make business a powerful force for sustainable development. This is not simply the wish of environmentalists or a few dreamers; it is the now becoming vision of many corporate leaders. (There was much evidence of this at the recent UNGC Leaders Summit, for example, Carl-Henrik Svanberg – President and CEO of LM Ericsson. He affirmed that “closing the development gap is not a question of philanthropy, but a business case.”)

UNGC Local Networks offer one avenue to engagement with the business sector at the local level. There are currently 61 established networks and another 20 or so at the pre-launch phase. These networks work to orient companies on local priorities for engagement. They also serve as a bridge between local realities and the international Corporate Citizenship initiative. This offers interesting opportunities to move innovative local solutions upstream for global replication, or to take global issues down to the level of local implementation.

I look forward to your comments.

Kathrine Raleigh
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Dated February 18, 2008

John Musemakweri, UNDP Rwanda

Dear Colleagues,

Thanks every one for the informative discussion.

In my view the primary barriers to achieving sustainable development in most countries is the approaches that are commonly used especially in most developing countries. In most cases I ask myself, a couple of questions especially when I hear 'we' development practitioners talking about development or sustainable development. First and foremost, development for who! To me the moment we have the solid information of the communities that need sustainable development, that is; what are their needs, what are their capacities regarding sustainable development, what kind of existing knowledge do they have, what are there barriers or constraints to achieving sustainable development, what kind of opportunities that exist in the specific community, what are the available resources with in the communities themselves, and above all what are the real felt needs. Once these questions are skillfully resolved or answered, then in my view the next step would be to work with the (communities) as Semana, (1999) stated: a) start where communities are; b) start with what they have; c) and then, help them to help themselves. This can apply to developing countries or communities. This situation will promote ownership hence sustainable development. To achieve sustainable development, there is a need by policy makers, leaders and development partners and practitioners alike to first and foremost search for solid information to understand issues pertaining sustainable development, all stakeholders in development need to do continuous homework to fully understand issues and main challenges and barriers of achieving sustainable development. The primary barriers to sustainable development based on my life experience having been raised in the developing world is that, in some cases development is somehow forced to the poor communities without establishing their felt needs. It is worth mentioning that some development initiatives have been based on charity. Therefore, underdeveloped communities should participate in every effort intended to improve their livelihoods in order to promote ownership of sustainable development. This can be done by utilizing the leadership, development partners and practitioners who should continuously study development issues thoroughly and skillfully.

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Ropate Qalo, Associate Professor, School of Social Science, Fiji Islands

Having read the three questions that were posed for our comments I thought that my contribution was important as preconditions for discussions on policy formulation and implementation. My reading of some contributions like the one on nano science prompted me on the response that I penned on Achieving Sustainable Development. Being someone studying development for the last 35 years, it is difficult to allow the discussion to begin without a well grounded realistic preconditions and assumptions that will make matters work before we can accept how nano science can be of benefit realistically to ordinary folks and rural communities.

Kind regards,
Ropate Qalo.

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Soe Thant Aung, UNDP Angola

Dear All,

To interpret "Achieving sustainable development" is so wide and complex as a whole. Here I like to contribute with simple example:

1. Relating to Financial aspect, it could be taken as saving in the bank. As far as sufficient capital is in the bank, periodically interest for the capital will be received.
If the interest is sufficient to use it could be called sustained. If the need and uses is less than the interest, additional can be reinvest as capital and it can be similar to sustainable development in Financial management. If the interest is not enough and have to use part of the capital, then there would be risk for the financial sustainable in the future.

2. Forest reservation.

It would be also similar as the example above.

The biomass increased as time passed. As far as extraction from forest is far more than the periodical biomass incremental, there would be risk for depletion.
Here again completed protection of forest may also risk to disaster likes forest fired happened in Greek or in California.

If the principle of Sustainable development could be well understood it could hopefully to apply as relevant to other sectors.

All complex and wider issue may begin from the simple ones.

Soe Thant Aung, Consultant
Former Planning and programming Advisor UNDP Angola

Mary Rose Kaczorowski, Executive Director, Circle the Earth

We have produced enough documents worldwide utilizing the paper extracted from many forests that identify the long term consequences of our inability to take action on sustainability challenges.

If we are going to utilize an economic class of constructed rules that do not integrate actual real world aggregated costs, our underlying assumptions based on those "rules" will then prevent us from achieving the very outcomes we wish to optimize.

We have to reconnect our thinking and models and habit the world over to critical thinking and cost of environmental efficiency-- We have to ask how my government, my business, my corporation, my NGO is supporting or standing in the way of sustainable practices. What are the linkages and impacts of our models, practices and actions? We live in a world of waste. For example: Who really benefits when multinational GMO ethanol corn monocrop producing farms pollute and poison the local water table for an export crop that eventually depletes and sterilizes soil? We know from many studies that mid-size IPM and Permaculture approaches to Ag food production are more sustainable. Another Example: The garbage islands in our Oceans have made the news recently.

Another question: How do mid to small scale sustainable development micro-enterprise systems compete against Multinational Enterprises under current WTO/NAFTA/ CAFTA etc. rules.

Our aim should be not only to question all this in regards to aggregate behavior of systems and institutions. We need to BE CLEAR that it is unprofitable to carry on with our current economic policies that are poisoning us on this planet.

To have a shift toward sustainability we need governments and civil society to:

- A) Put energy and direct investments jobs created by sustainable practices and sustainable systems (Marrakech Process).
- B) Understand that environmental degradation has high economic costs (Insurance, transport, public health, and social).
- C) Follow established business codes of conduct, i.e. the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. And seriously look at how we provide exemption of one group in society from liability for their actions and decisions (the corporate sector/parastatal practices).
- D) Translate into in all actions that environmental sustainability is good for business.
- E) We already know that corporations re-tool for technology upgrades, business practices, mergers, etc. and they still are in operation and still are very profitable. So saying that any of this shifting to sustainability is an economic inefficiency is inaccurate.
- F) To help make the transitions we need sectoral crediting mechanisms rather than projects (per OECD Contribution to UN CSD 15) for investments to encourage sustainable environmental systems.
- G) Consider land access mechanisms. How is land treated as in wealth generation and social aggregate utility.
- H) Valuation of Land vs. Eco-System services
- I) Restructuring GDP to include Sustainability indicators (social and environmental)
- j) Include all commitments to MDG goals based on the above especially in regards to gender integration and per International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Article 2.1, 22 etc.

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Dated: February 19, 2008

Ramit Basu, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (Local Self Government), India

Dear Friends,

This is a very pertinent topic not only for discussion but more for action. I would like to contribute with reference to my learning during education as well as during my professional association in the last 8 years.

One of the most important step towards sustainable development is perhaps a choice of the way we live and work. I am referring to the *choice of technology!* and having being a student of *Appropriate Technology*, I have had the experience of witnessing how the choice of technology decides the future of human existence, which is perhaps a very well known fact across the world. But what we fail to do is to put it in practice and though 'ideal' it may seem, we must endeavor to find out low cost, human and eco-friendly technologies. In India, there has been experiments with low cost and affordable techniques which have made communities self reliant to some extent. Even, alternative technologies, though may be high tech, but which reduces the burden on natural resources or taps them effectively and do not pose a threat to the ecology and species should be promoted and used widely. They should reflect clearly in industrial policies and international instruments like the WTO.

Infact more and more research should be geared towards developing such options and the governments should incentivize such efforts wherever taken up. I would like to refer to the *UN Global Compact* which is a framework aligning businesses around the world to 10 universally followed principles. There is a need to make such a framework workable within countries with guidelines / strictures of making development sustainable and making technology accessible and reachable for the common man. International collaboration / co-operation between countries especially neighboring countries wherein industrial activities in one adversely affects the life in the other, also need to be reviewed and set up, especially amongst developing and underdeveloped countries. (This is essential to avoid the negative effects of mindless industrialization and urbanization in the context of development, thus creating another set of problems telling upon the economic and social fabric of the nation.) Another important step towards promoting and using people and nature friendly technologies and practices will be to *orient the younger generations* about the same through suitable amendments in the basic education and higher education modules and also the importance / economic benefits accrued out of living in harmony with nature.

Secondly, I would strongly advocate the setting up of and empowering a strong and sensitive system of governance right from the national till the grassroots / local self governing level so that development becomes sustainable and owned by the people. An effective governing system will not only help in the achievement of MDGs but most importantly, the challenge which lies beyond 2015, sustaining the same.

In India, for example, the constitution provides for local self governing bodies down to the village level which enables the institutions of governance to take care of the local needs and carry out

development which is in consonance with the local community and for the overall good. This will help prevent governments at the higher level to intervene and initiate processes for development without the consent of the people which will be short lived / for vested interests and ultimately acting against the interest of future generations. But in order to strengthen such a system of governance, it requires a high level of advocacy at the level of higher governments as well as orienting the younger generation and preparing them to take up leadership positions with sensitivity and responsibility.

Last but not the least; I would endorse the 8th MDG which speaks of international co-operation. Achieving sustainable development through sharing of experiences and knowledge is a vital means which should not only be at the international but also at the national and regional level.

Best wishes

Ramit Basu

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Mengue mengue Oloumou, Cameroon

English Translation Follows

La question du développement ainsi que l'intégration des composantes telles que : la croissance économique, le développement social et la protection de l'environnement occupent une place importante dans les débats d'aujourd'hui. Ceci est d'autant plus sensible quand on observe qu'une grande partie de la population mondiale s'enfoncé dans un état de pauvreté inquiétante et que la situation de l'écosystème ne cesse de se dégrader.

Les politiques économiques macro-économiques affectent le processus de croissance d'où l'intérêt de déterminer l'influence du déficit budgétaire, de l'inflation, de l'endettement extérieur dans l'évolution de la pauvreté. De même les facteurs tels que les termes de l'échange, les programmes d'allègement de la dette extérieure revêtent de l'importance de par l'influence qu'ils peuvent exercer sur le processus de croissance et donc l'allègement ou l'aggravation de la pauvreté. Il y aurait une relation étroite entre la croissance et la réduction de la pauvreté. Il est donc nécessaire que cette croissance soit suffisamment élevée pour ne pas être absorbée totalement par la croissance démographique.

La question de la protection de l'environnement est tellement sensible et nécessite par conséquent qu'on s'y penche avec plus de sérieux parce que c'est toute la planète qui est menacée. Les facteurs culturels et économiques semblent se présenter comme les deux principales barrières dans la lutte contre la destruction de l'écosystème. En effet, pour ce qui est du facteur culturel, une grande partie de nos populations rurales préparent leurs repas depuis des siècles en utilisant le

bois de chauffage. Ceci suppose la destruction des forêts. Dire à une personne qui a vécu dans cette pratique pendant des décennies d'abandonner serait comme si on lui demandait d'abandonner sa culture. Il est donc nécessaire d'être patient dans l'éducation des populations. Un autre facteur est la pauvreté : abandonner le bois de chauffage implique qu'il faudrait trouver une autre source d'énergie, ce qui implique qu'il faut déboursier de l'argent pour avoir du gaz domestique par exemple alors qu'une grande partie de la population vit avec un revenu par habitant de moins d'un dollar (1\$ / day) par habitant et par jour.

On peut constater que la pauvreté et l'éducation entretiennent des relations assez étroites se manifestant sous divers aspect. Soit la pauvreté se conçoit comme une entrave à l'éducation, soit l'éducation éloigne la pauvreté et participe au développement. L'éducation contribue à rentabiliser le capital humain, elle facilite l'ouverture de la société aux méthodes d'hygiène, de protection sanitaire, de protection de l'environnement. En effet, un paysan instruit comprendra plus rapidement que son travail de destruction de la forêt dans ses activités a une influence sur l'environnement.

merci et à bientôt,
cordialement,

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English Translation

Dear colleagues,

Thanks for all contributions,

The question of the development as well as the integration of the components such as: the economic growth, the social development and the environmental protection occupy an important place in the debates of today. This is all the more sensitive when it is observed that a great part of the world population is inserted in a state of worrying poverty and that the situation of the ecosystem does not cease being degraded.

The macro-economic economic policies affect the process of growth from where interest to determine the influence of the budget deficit, inflation, the debt foreign in the evolution of poverty. In the same way the factors such as the terms of trade, reduction programs of the foreign debt are of importance from the influence which they can exert on the process of growth and thus the lightening or the aggravation of poverty. There would be a close connection between the growth and the reduction of poverty. It is thus necessary that this growth is sufficiently high not to be absorbed completely by the demographic growth.

The question of the environmental protection is so sensitive and requires consequently that one leans there with more the serious one because it is the entire planet which is threatened. The cultural and economic factors seem to be presented in the form of two principal barriers in the fight against the destruction of the ecosystem. Indeed, as regards the cultural factor, a great part of our rural populations prepare their meals since centuries by using the firewood. This supposes the destruction of the forests. To say to a person who lived in this practice during decades to give up would be as if one asked him to give up his culture. It is thus necessary to be patient in the education of the populations.

Another factor is poverty: to give up the firewood implies that it would be necessary to find another source of energy, which implies that it is necessary to spend money to have gas

domesticates for example whereas a great part of the population lives with an income per capita of less than one dollar (1\$/day) per capita and day. One can note that poverty and education maintain the rather close relations appearing under various aspects. Either poverty is conceived like an obstacle with education, or education moves away poverty and takes part in the development. Education contributes to make profitable the human capital; it facilitates the opening of the company to the methods of hygiene, health protection, environmental protection. Indeed, an educated peasant will include/understand more quickly than its work of destruction of the forest in its activities has an influence on the environment.

Abimbola Akeem, Farm Superintendent

Dear esteemed colleagues,

The barriers to sustainable development can be stated as following

- a) Setting up too many unwieldy goals
- b) Use of top-down management approach
- c) Focus on use of external technology instead of indigenous technology development with peer technological support
- d) Focus on esoteric research instead of research towards meeting developmental needs i.e. research for development
- e) Setting unrealistic standards-for instance environmental standards need be set with a view towards making it a pull for economic development not antagonistic to economic development or discouraging economic development, at worst complimentary to economic development
- f) Corrupted values-the present value system of living for ourselves only and today and letting those that comes after take care of themselves needs thorough reorientation
- g) Poor monitoring and evaluation system of processes. There is no M&E system, to include the beneficiaries of the development process, to indicate the level of performance, what is being done right or wrong and where to proceed from there
- h) Poor coordination of the various agencies handling the sustainable development projects i) poor political will and knowledge - most political actors lack political will for sustaining development

Thanks

Abimbola Akeem,
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Dr. J G Ray, Reader and Director of Environment Studies, India

Dear all,

This is to present certain basic questions to discuss by all who think about sustainable development.

Most of us who identify and propose schemes of sustainable development often forget the fact that what the present day humans suggest as 'development' may not be the real development to sustain for future generations. Because there are certain fundamental questions to answer before we define the details of a developmental concept.

What is the ultimate aim of sustainable development?

Is it the sustenance of human species forever on the earth? If that is the case; why do we demand that?

Or

Is sustainable development a programme of sustenance of welfare and happiness of humans?

If that is the case, is there a common norm for true happiness?

If sustainable happiness is the ultimate aim of development, we must define what true happiness is.

If humans cannot agree on a common definition for true happiness, how can we sustain it?

Ecology points out that sustenance of natural relationships - between the living and the non-living, between different individuals within all populations and also between different populations of a community and between different communities in the global ecosystems (relations of course include positive and negative types) are important to conserve stability of living systems on the earth.

Life is a system and is an infinite phenomenon. All organisms live together and there is no separate life in individuals and individual groups (population, community or ecosystem). Therefore, stability of the global living system makes an environment suitable for the stable existence (sustenance) of every species and the individuals within them; including that of humans on the earth.

Is it not then the environment stability that ultimately gives happiness to humans forever?

Stability of health, wealth and comfort, of course sustain happiness of humans.

But when there is no true definition of what is true wealth or comfort and what is the limit to the requirements of wealth and comfort for an individual to exist, how can we sustain it?

Can we define these aspects without some spiritual dimensions to our existence?

If there is no programme of sharing wealth and comfort among the present day generation how can we sustain happiness presently in the world?

Without a strong conviction of the common life that the current generation share among globally how can the current world share their wealth for the welfare of all?

If the present day humans exploit the wealth meant for future generations how can the human species survive on the earth forever?

Ecology, of course, reveals us the secret and intricacies of all natural relationships to be conserved. It is a moral science. But if we are materialistic and have no belief in the future generations as part of our own, how can we safeguard the interest of them?

If we are careful of our own territories and people as the most important and the rest as totally unrelated and of no significance to our existence, how can we support them in their needs?

Thinking of sustainable development of course pose a number of similar questions to us. Therefore, technology and theories are not the only solutions that would be helpful in sustainable development.

Is it not true that the Green Planet need the emergence of a war-free, friendly and peaceful global society with strong belief in unity in diversity, and dreams for a heavenly paradise to come on earth?

Only if the technocrats and technologists; social scientists and social workers; environment scientists and environmentalists; economists, political scientists and politicians; moral scientists, religious people and religious leaders, of the present generation discuss together in a single room and work together for future safety, then only the Global system will sustain with a happy human life forever on it.

We need better national and global efforts to unite people of all kinds, caste and creed to work together for common goals. Can the UN systems persuade the present nations and the world leaders to such a conviction to work towards sustainable development?

Thanking you all

Dr J G Ray
Reader and Director of Environment Studies,
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Dated: February 20, 2008

Boengiu Constantin, Mayors Office, City of Piatra Neamt, Romania

Dear colleagues,

1. What are the experiences of countries where Sustainable Development (SD) strategies have been adopted?

A National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) was adopted by Romania in 1999 with the help of the UNDP. Thru 2007, the Local Agenda 21s (LA21) of thirty towns and cities and two counties have been established with the help of UNDP.

However:

In Romania data and information at local level are either not available or incomplete and do not respond to the specific needs of the decision makers. Therefore, LA21 could not proceed from an in-depth analysis, interventions could not be properly prioritised and monitoring of the outcome

could not be achieved. The LA21s did not include mechanisms for evaluation, update and renewal for new programming periods. This is probably why some of the LA21s were replaced by new, different strategic plans, a few years after their adoption.

Until very recently, the NSDS could be found on the website of the National Centre for Sustainable Development (the UNDP executing agency in Romania for Local Agenda 21 implementation) only in English. Even if there were a Romanian version, promoting it only through the WWW is not enough in a country where 76% of the population do not use the internet.

The process of introduction of SD was interrupted for more than two years between 2005 and 2007 due to the lack of government support. There was a controversy between the National Centre for Sustainable Development and the Ministry of Environment regarding which entity was more entitled to manage this process. This controversy ended in autumn 2007 when they were put to work together, most likely at the request of the European Commission.

A Romanian version of the renewed European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development could not be found on any official website.

2. To what extent the key elements of these strategies have been reflected in the development frameworks and national budgets? What were the major hurdles and how were they tackled?

Measures for economic growth, social cohesion and environment protection are included in both the European Cohesion Policy for Romania and the National Programming Documents. However, they are not always integrated in a sustainable development strategy.

3. What have been the key success factors to integrating environmental goods and services in your country's economic systems? (For example, payment for protecting a watershed linked to water user fees)

Romania has taken several steps for Social Cohesion and Environment Protection, not as a result of its own Sustainable Development Strategy but simply to implement different European directives and regulations.

4. What is needed to drive further positive change towards sustainable development? At country and global level.

Aside from several experts, few people have an in depth knowledge of SD concept. Some people have heard of it but the only thing they remember is its strategic objective: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". A survey would probably reveal that most of the population has not even heard about SD. However, to be successful, debates on sustainable development should be brought to the general public. Information and awareness campaigns about risks of unsustainable behaviour and the people's interest in promoting sustainable development measures are necessary. Media should be encouraged (motivated, paid or both) to become involved, especially television. Even though all three pillars of SD are important, economic development is a precondition for the fulfilment of the other two. Therefore, special attention should be paid to growth and jobs. But sustainable behaviour (from the social and environmental point of view) should be encouraged and rewarded and unsustainable behaviour should be discouraged and penalised. Sustainable Development should not be implemented in the same way everywhere. It has to provide different solutions for communities in both developed and developing countries. Even though we are a European Union Member State, Romania is still a developing country.

Sincerely,

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Victoria Hikcman, PhD Research Student, Centre for Sustainable Development, Cambridge UK.

Firstly I would like to express my support to a point previously mentioned in this discussion; we must be realistic in setting goals to achieve sustainable development. It has been said that advancing simultaneously on all three fronts of sustainability is not possible. It can certainly be challenging, in fact, perhaps the situation has to worsen before it can improve.

In response to the moderators' request for specific examples of country experiences in tackling sustainable development, I would like to add the following:

There is a need to prioritise policy-maker knowledge and investments in science and engineering in order to drive further positive change towards sustainable development. Lessons can be drawn from the UK example.

The formulation of policy on sustainable development presents a significant challenge where there is a need for integrated thinking across the '3 pillars' and where long time scales must be considered. The requirement for 'joined-up thinking' and a greatly expanded time dimension presents policy makers and government with unprecedented difficulty.

Governments need to be encouraged to include the leading scientists of their country to play a role in policy making. Science and technology to foster innovation is a key element currently lacking from many governments. Policy makers, traditionally without science and engineering backgrounds, must be well informed of the latest scientific consensus, be aware of practical solutions to current issues and could benefit from applying an 'engineering approach' to policy making.

It is pleasing to see that in the UK the situation is improving with a trend towards 'Evidence Based Policy-Making'; this refers to an approach to policy development and implementation which uses rigorous techniques to develop and maintain a robust evidence base from which to develop policy options. (<http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/how/evidence.htm>). Government 'must produce policies that really deal with problems; that are forward-looking and shaped by evidence rather than a response to short-term pressures; that tackle causes not symptoms' (1999 Modernising Government White Paper). This is precisely how sustainable development policies should be designed.

The UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is the lead Department in Government responsible for the formulation of policy on sustainable development. Defra has a well-established Science Advisory Council to provide expert, independent and published advice on science policy and strategy. Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor's role is to provide ministers with the best possible scientific advice and build on existing measures to ensure that science and technology are used to inform policy. The Council and Advisor support the UK government to improve sustainability by promoting consistency across Defra and working together with other Government departments.

Defra appreciates that engineering approaches may be helpful in combination with their current areas of activity and realises that engineering as a discipline could provide thinking, tools and specific techniques to contribute to the formulation of sustainable development policy. Defra has commissioned a piece of research which concludes that engineering has a significant contribution

to make in the development of policy in terms of ‘Process’ – the approach of engineering thinking applied to problem solving and ‘Content’ – the improved connection with, and conduct of, engineering.

(<http://www.defra.gov.uk/science/how/documents/DEFRA%20FINAL%20Report.pdf>)

Ejembi John Onah (Focus Nanotechnology Africa Inc) highlighted in the first contribution to this discussion, ‘any sustainable development must include innovative science and technology policy as a pillar to socio-political and environmental factors...(and)...any sustainable development that addresses effect rather than cause will not succeed’. This applies to the actions needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Meeting the goals will require a substantial reorientation of development policies and governments should recognise that science and engineering can offer real answers to meeting today’s challenges. The provision of adequate infrastructure, water and sanitation (which in turn will contribute towards improving health, development, equality, poverty alleviation etc.) can be realised through engineering solutions. Once these engineered solutions are applied, only then can the Millennium Development Goals be achieved. Mechanisms for advising governments on science, technology, innovation and applied engineering need to be improved to better inform policy for sustainable development.
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José J. Jiménez, Profesor School of Architecture, UAEMéx, Toluca, México

Education and Sustainability

I have been reading your contributions on the subject under discussion and, no doubt, each contribution is very valuable. My understanding is that if willingness to do what is necessary and actions to implement these policies are not taken seriously.

As to the first question put on the table by the moderators, I would say that without education and willingness to accept and apply the principles of sustainability, no single policy, strategy or program will succeed in achieving development (wealth + equity + sustainability). What I see in my country is that the good intentions remain on political discourse and on official documents but it is sad to see that very few individuals put into action to contribute to sustainability. As a society we have to sacrifice, change our habits and transformation of the way of life, etc to achieve sustainable development. For example how oil reserves are depleting and it has a worst impact on our environment but still there is a large increase in automobile industry. And it’s sad to see that how WE ‘the people’ despite the knowledge of this global environment crisis, still do not work towards sustainability of our planet. Besides, I have noticed that highly educated segment of population also have poor understanding of sustainability.

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Dated: February 21 2008

Ram Shankar, UNDP Maldives

Greetings from the Maldives. I am pleased to offer my personal thoughts to this important debate by answering the questions set out by the moderators:

1. What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

Let us take the example of a small island state such as the Maldives. The main barriers in integrating the objectives of sustainable development in the country's development strategies mainly relates to the lack of political will and proper governance structure in making these integrations a reality. The 7th National Development Plan, which is the national equivalent of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), has actually integrated these three objectives into the document. Yet, a big problem relates to the lack long-term strategy in making these objectives a reality. The often heard issue relates to climate change and the fact that global warming will destroy the Maldives – issues that are often raised by the Maldives at every possible forum. However, there are other environmental issues of concern as well that merit attention but are not given adequate consideration. One is the pollution in the capital, Male, which is chocked with vehicles in the 1.2 square kms area! There clearly appears to be a lack of political will to propose alternatives to the daily increasing private vehicle usage such as public transportation or use of non-petroleum based fuels. Another environmental issue of concern relates to disposal of waste (in the capital and in other islands) – the reality is that there is no long-term strategy for to address this issue. Even today, one can see large items being disposed off into the ocean in the capital (items such as furniture, refrigerators etc) – beyond the tourist's view of these goings-on. The challenge is to spread education and awareness on solid waste disposal and environmental pollution amongst the general population in both the capital and in the islands.

Re: social development and economic growth, which are inter-linked, the issue is to address social inequity and disparities between the small percentage of vastly rich and the majority of Maldivians who are relatively very poor. The challenge is to address income disparities and the proper utilization of profits from the tourism industry and to ensure that these are routed to the neediest and most vulnerable in the Maldives – this has not happened and bluntly put, only a small percentage of the population has benefited vastly from the tourism industry's profits. Social challenges are to address the growing drug problem afflicting youth around the Maldives and lack of adequate employment strategy for the youth. In addition, there are also cases of inequities related to the need for support to divorced women and their children. Policy level solutions include the introduction of a proper taxation system and the ability to distribute wealth more equitably.

2. How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level?

In the Maldives, the 7th National Development Plan (NDP) is the equivalent of the PRSP and is the country's main poverty reduction / development framework for the period 2008-2011. The

UNDAF which is in tune with national priorities does indeed address some of these issues. The reality is that the UN System is also limited in its efforts by a paucity of funds. So, there are only small components that the UN System can support both from a policy and practical view point. Further, the UN System is in constant competition with international partners and the national country which wants international partners to directly support its budgetary efforts. In addition, in the post-tsunami phase, getting long-term donor support is providing to be a problem for a small and wealthy country such as the Maldives (high GDP country). So, at the international level, there needs to be more commitment to the UN as a System by international partners in achieving development results – this commitment in turn will then motivate external partner's route their funding through the UN System. This will take time. Correspondingly, it is also the UN System's responsibility to show full accountability and thorough measurement of results and the positive change through its work.

3. How can our organizations and each of us most effectively support countries in leaning from the practices of those countries that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development?

I believe that south-south cooperation and learning is key to this effort. In the post-tsunami phase of the recovery project, south-south cooperation has been key in getting expertise from different countries across the region to assist in the recovery efforts including sharing of best practices, introducing technical & innovative training to island communities in the Maldives. South-south cooperation could also include training and spreading of awareness at the political level including within the executive and governance structures of the Government.

Sincerely,

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Fulai Sheng, UNEP Geneva

Thanks for taking this initiative. My personal comments:

1. Although the three pillars of sustainable development and their integration are generally recognised and accepted, in practice, decision-makers face the issue of short-term vs. long term, which implies certain sequential priorities among the three pillars. Simply proposing that all three pillars be given the same weight is simplistic and unhelpful. What is truly needed is the establishment of scientifically-determined but locally adjusted sustainability thresholds to guide the often implicit weighting exercise. Also needed is a genuine appreciation of sustainable development challenges as well as opportunities for society on the part of the government and citizens. So far these challenges and opportunities have largely been perceived as the "voices"

from the sustainable development community. A much larger constituency for sustainable development in each country needs to be cultivated and become active in development strategy making. Talking about opportunity, one emerging possibility is to demonstrate tangible contributions that a sustainable development approach can make to socioeconomic imperatives.

2. Various existing instruments need to be made much more practical as opposed to be driven either by dogmatism/rhetorics or by unquestioned national priorities for fear of undermining national ownership. To be practical means these instruments should lead to solutions to specific sustainable development problems by certain deadlines, problems that are identified both by the country and the external agencies as priorities. This does not mean taking what has been proposed by the countries as they are; it requires substantive and constructive policy advice to be communicated to countries in a sensitive manner. Lack of this, we may be able to achieve full national ownership, but it may go further away from sustainable development. Also, giving critical yet constructive advice should be seen as part of the process that will eventually attain national ownership. Whoever is to give such advice, however, must ensure the quality of their advice. Advice generated from within the countries, not necessarily from the government sector, should be given special consideration and its entry into policy debates should be facilitated.

3. Talking about learning from others, lots of learning activities that are related to aspects of sustainable development exist. But there are two major shortcomings. One is that they tend to focus on particular aspects, such as gender mainstreaming, the human rights approach to development, ecosystem management, or decent work, etc, rather than on the whole picture of sustainable development challenges at the macro level and how to exercise leadership at that level to manage the overall societal progress towards sustainability. The other drawback in many existing learning programmes is the lack of a long-term strategy to cultivate a critical mass of sustainable development leaders for countries, who will be essential for leading the campaign to win the sustainable development battle. An existing institution such as the UN University should have the ambition to take on this challenge of producing a continuous stream of high level leaders as champions for sustainable development.

Again, these are personal views and should not be attributed to my organization.

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Dear all,

Following much of the discussion thus far, I will first proceed to answer the specific questions posed by our moderators, linking into these answers issues to do with capacity building, incentives for individuals and goals of sustainable development and the MDG.

What are the experiences of countries where SD strategies have been adopted?

Australia has adopted strategies for SD. Indeed, Australia has been recognised for focusing on 'ecologically sustainable development' rather than mere 'sustainable development'. Whilst some may take a positive attitude towards the adoption of our strategy, it provides several lessons for other countries, especially federalised legal systems.

Each jurisdiction within Australia has unfortunately taken a different approach. The terminology used for sustainable development between jurisdictions varies, as do the key initiatives and policies underlying it, which can lead to different interpretations by courts and regulating authorities and may cause issues for the general population to understand what their rights and obligations may be. There is not a concerted education campaign conducted by the governments to assist individuals in the wider community to understand the changes. Furthermore, each jurisdiction has fragmented the regulation of different resources (biodiversity, minerals, water, carbon, forests). This fragmentation prevents the ability to introduce a theoretical approach to clear and consistent framework for resource management, let alone a practical outcome. A chart has been produced as part of our research to demonstrate the problems and can be found online at <http://www.ljrc.law.qut.edu.au/research/projects/pasd/>.

There have been some successful implementations however. In countries where there is a sparse land mass, there can be a greater reliance on natural resources for travel etc. The Queensland government has introduced a key policy on 'transit orientated development' to encourage the populations to live around public transport infrastructure, thus hopefully reducing cars on the road and emissions.

1) To what extent the key elements of these strategies been reflected in the development of frameworks and national budgets? What were the major hurdles and how were they tackled?

As stated in the last question, there is no clear framework within Australia. Rather, there is a host of different legislative instruments. Legislation is adopted in an ad hoc manner, and appears to pay little respect to the overall nature and three pillars of sustainable development. Rather, it appears that each pillar is viewed as a discrete pillar with little integration.

There is no clarity in the budgets for sustainable development as a result of the ad hoc nature of what has been undertaken. Where measures have been adopted, one must look across a range of materials in order to gauge a clear understanding of what the government's economic policies are.

2) What have been the key success factors to integrating environmental goods and services in your country's economic system? (For example, payment for protecting a watershed links to water user fees)

Despite problems existing in legislation, governments have adopted environmental incentives in some States. For example, Queensland, which had been experiencing a severe drought until recently (now several regions are flooded), introduced highly subsidised rebates for people to ensure that water-saving devices were fitted to properties. These rebates have generally been within the means of people from most socio-economic backgrounds.

Furthermore, the Queensland governments and councils have special rules on property development. All new houses etc built are required to meet certain levels of energy and water efficiency, hopefully assisting the reduction of use of energy consumption. A different approach has been taken in the northern suburbs of Adelaide, South Australia. In this region, there are large man-made wetlands, increasing the biodiversity in the region, as well as environmental protection. These wetlands have been used to filter and recycle water, which can also be used on residential properties. The process requires two separate water meters: one for drinking water and water consumption, the second measuring water for non-human consumption, such as gardening, industrial use and toilets. The recycled water is charged at a reduced rate, providing incentives for businesses to set up and develop in this region, an area which historically has been economically less well-off.

Unfortunately however, other rebate schemes which have been introduced are less successful and increasing participation in energy saving measures (or clean technology such as solar power) due to the prohibitive costs involved. There are some incentives for solar hot water systems, but these still leave the technology beyond the affordability of many in the community. This is somewhat disappointing for a nation where sunlight is generally in abundance.

3) What is needed to drive further positive change towards sustainable development? At both a country and a global level.

As has been stated by several contributors to this forum, education and public participation are necessary, both globally and locally. There are a couple of programs which are interesting for this basis.

Australia offers a program to young people called 'Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development' www.ayad.com.au. These programs are ages at university graduates with some experience to engage in international development programs and assist in capacity building in nations in the Asia-Pacific region. It works in a similar fashion to the notion of an internship, with the general themes relating to: governance, gender and environment. The program is funded by the Australian government, and provides a stipend for young Australians, as well as mentors, to ensure the best assistance possible is provided to the nation where the young person is placed. Such a program is useful for developing peaceful relations between nations, the youth (and future generations) as well as assisting communities which would otherwise not necessarily receive assistance. It is also useful for young people directly, as it enhances their knowledge and communication skills and provides some financial support to undertake such programs at a time many may not have financial capacity to do it themselves.

Australia does not have 'national service' or compulsory 'military' service. Nations which do could re-direct the compulsory service requirement to programs similar to the Australian Youth Ambassador Program, enabling and encouraging young people to gain skills in development and capacity building (whether domestically, regionally or internationally) whilst assisting others. Other programs do exist in a more limited capacity, and should be commended (such as Japan's 'Ship for World Youth' and some European governments sponsor a few internships at United Nations bodies), but these programs offer chances for greater contribution at a much reduced rate. It is programs like this which could greatly assist in achieving sustainable development goals. Similarly, universities could introduce such sponsored programs into the curriculum for students to gain credit – especially in disciplines of engineers, technology and science – but also disciplines such as law.

Yours sincerely,

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Francis Stuart, Research Assistant International Association for Community Development, United Kingdom

International Association for Community Development (IACD) IACD is an international not-for-profit, non-government organisation committed to building a global network of people and organisations working toward social justice through community development.

We have special consultative status with the United Nations, through consultations with international bodies such as the ILO, the European Union, ECOSOC and the African Union.

In my opinion one of the biggest problems, and yet largest opportunities for sustainable development, is that of accountability. By this I mean accounting for our actions towards our economic, environmental and social surroundings, not just as individuals but, more importantly, as decision makers, money-makers and service providers. The current system, where much of this accountability is left to market forces, does not seem to be doing a very good job of this.

Reflecting the true costs of development is obviously more easily said than done. After all, if the global market doesn't define sustainable development, who does? The answer for me is to be found, at least in part, in local communities and the poorest. They after all are the ones who feel the brunt of negative social, environmental and economic impacts - and they should therefore have a role accounting for these impacts. Moreover, if you believe that development should work for the poorest, then the poorest must be involved in work towards development. If they are not, work towards social, environmental and economic development can become charity for social, environmental and economic development; and speaking personally, I don't think charity is as sustainable as work.

Without this more participative approach sustainable development will continue to be a distant hope. It is notable that recent development in the name of sustainability, yet without the consent and participation of local communities, has turned out to be unsustainable and harmful. Recent developments in biofuels are one example of this.

What all this alludes to is that the social side of sustainable development must not be forgotten or downplayed. After all sustainable development is not sustainable if it attempts to account for the economic and environmental at the expense of the social.

In conclusion then sustainable development must

- Account for its social, economic and environmental impact;
- Involve local communities and the poorest;

- And, as a result, bear in mind the social as well as the environmental and economic.

Only then will we start addressing some of the barriers to sustainable development.

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Rongming Wu, Senior Policy Researcher for Fujian Provincial Government, China

First of all, I would like to reiterate the importance of Chapter 37 of Agenda 21 on national mechanism and international cooperation on capacity building. In particular, 1) the leadership of decision making bodies at governments and 2) their ability to access to the international support. However, fragmented approaches amongst the international, national and local levels have been hindering the cross-sector and cross-regional coordination. Chapter 37 of Agenda 21 can be seen at <http://www.gdrc.org/uem/capacity-building.html>

Second, it is important to stress 9 types of key gaps, introduced in the “Global Evaluation of Capacity 21” published by UNDP in 2002. These gaps are:

Implementation gap (most of the project outputs fail to achieve intended “outcome”)

Accountability gap (Lack of clear mechanism to hold project authorities accountable, primarily because the local stakeholders are not adequately involved)

Continuity gap (Once project funds exhaust, there is no continuity on the ground)

Scalability gap (Lack of replication and scaling up of projects)

Multiplier gap (Instead of project, yielding positive effect on outside their primary focus, some projects often led to negative impacts on the environment).

Sustainability gap (Most development projects are based primarily on economic criteria and often have negative, unintended consequences for social and environmental issues, which could have been avoided or minimized through proper consultation with the stakeholders)

Technology gap (Development projects, particularly those that are driven largely by external interests or considerations, often lead to inappropriate technology choices and considerable waste of capital resources)

Institutional gap (Although development projects have occasionally led to the establishment of effective institutions for innovation, incubation and delivery of solutions, the achievements over the past 50 years fall far short of what’s needed).

Leadership gap (Failure in developing and supporting local leaders. On the contrary, in many places the international support contributed to an acceleration of the brain drain.

The full document of “the Global Evaluation of Capacity 21 1993 – 2001” is available at <http://www.capacity.undp.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentAttachmentID=603>

Third, key documents such as the National Sustainable Development Strategy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the UN Development Assistance Framework have put the integration of three pillars of sustainable development as the priority in the documents. However, when these strategic documents are translated into detailed projects to implement, it is found that most projects related to those documents are featured with sector-oriented approach. Especially, a number of local authorities seem to have difficulties to get their inputs reflected in such documents and projects delivered by the UNCT.

Lastly, there are many ongoing international initiatives to facilitate countries to effectively utilize the good practices that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development. Among them, I found the most aspiring one is Capacity 2015 Information Learning Network. The ILN is currently under construction.

Rongming Wu

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Pilot of UNDP CAPACITY 2015

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Member of the Experts Team of Fujian’s Local Sustainable Development

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James Greyson, Sustainability Analyst BlindSpot, United Kingdom

Dear All

This forum's topic of integrating economic, environmental and social goals seems to be exactly the right place to look for policies to match the scale and speed of global problems. Should this integration follow the path of recent decades, of balancing a bit less growth against a bit more environmental and social protection? Or could a far more ambitious integration be available, where the three goals are aligned in a win-win-win strategy that allows sustainable development to finally happen?

This vital question of integration can be traced back 15 years before the Brundtland Report to the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. The conference Declaration

(<http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=97&ArticleID=1503&l>

=en) covers all the themes of sustainable development (although the term was not yet in use). Some of the language is more ambitious than today, speaking for example of 'halting' the discharge of toxic substances and the 'elimination' of all weapons of mass destruction. However there is a large omission - the responsibilities of nation states are stated but those of the market are not. So problems caused by commercial activity became not a problem for the market but for States. This transfer of responsibility from polluters to governments persists today. Businesses and consumers today remain responsible for their impacts only to the limited extent that responsibility has been handed back to them by government.

The 1972 Declaration unintentionally blocked the integration of economics with the environment and society. Economic and social development was declared 'essential' for the improvement of quality of life (principle 8) whilst environmental policies having economic consequences should not 'hamper the attainment of better living conditions for all' (principle 11). This prioritization of economic development remains to this day and has been highlighted by our colleagues Glenn Okun and Joseph A. Giacalone. Hence national success continues to be measured primarily by economic growth, which includes every sort of economic activity including damaging activity and the costs of coping with damage. Current economics says little about sustainable development; in fact it suggests that 'any economic development is good development'.

Our colleague Teresa Flores offers us the key to integrating goals, to making development really mean sustainable development. She refers to the potential of a circular system of resource flows which was published more than 40 years ago by the American economist Kenneth Boulding (http://earthmind.net/_docs/boulding-1966.pdf). Circular economics is a national goal in China but is globally misunderstood as a technical goal for efficiency and recycling. In fact Boulding explained that circular economics covers all the issues today called sustainable development. Conventional linear economics uses prices that neglect the costs of preventing damage, with free extraction and dumping. Linear economics defines today's world of competing to grab what you can with resources and time running out fast.

Since the 1972 Declaration the role of global markets in global problems has become more evident. Nation states should now return responsibility for market-led problems back to the market, where it belongs. Markets should be switched from problem-makers to problem-solvers, uniting business, consumers and governments in a vigorous planetary survival pact. Whereas linear economics destroys the physical basis of future economic growth (not least by destabilizing the climate), circular economics offers the possibility of continuing economic growth. Governments have wasted decades trying to impose top-down limits on economic activity (such as emissions caps). They could instead agree a new world Declaration which reshapes all economic activity towards the circular system, so integrating economic, environmental and social development.

Circular economics can be achieved with just one new economic instrument, which would operate within markets and address all aspects of sustainable development. A second instrument can be used to reverse the legacy of ever increasing weapons spending. I'll outline these in part II of this e-discussion on policy initiatives. Meanwhile I'll gladly email the background paper to anyone who contacts me. It's being published by a NATO Science Programme.

Best wishes

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Dated: February 22, 2008

Jon Hobbs, Department for International Development, United Kingdom

I have only just managed to catch up with this interesting discussion but it has been really useful to me personally. Thanks for that.

A couple of points (provocative in part I hope!) from my side- most of which are reinforcing what others have already said.

Integrating the principles of SD into national development planning seems to generally be regarded as another example of MDG failure- at least to date. Why? probably because it cannot be measured nor can we clearly identify successes that can be attributed to that specific objective. In other words how do we know when we are being successful when we are dealing with providing a process more than a product? We know when we are failing clearly enough, but success is more difficult. It is not about how many times the word "sustainability" is mentioned in a PRSP or other NSDS it is about the outcomes achieved through a process which has many other contributing components. In our case it might be more about what our added value has been to avoid certain outcomes! How can we show development outcomes were more effective (sustainable?) because of our success at integration - it is a very difficult task and will never be uniquely attributable to that input. What and where is this 'significant progress' we refer to? How do we measure 'significance'?

Barriers? Attitudinal, lack of political will (Maldives is not alone here) and institutional clearly come out on top. Perhaps we have also been a bit too supply driven? Perhaps we have also been a bit territorial in our pet subjects/ approaches? I also have a personal pessimism about humanity (UNDP colleagues excepted of course!) that we (the more affluent anyhow) are all just far too selfish. I know I am!

Solutions? We have no shortage of policy guidance, tools, approaches, learned reviews and reports on the poverty- environment nexus etc etc- what we lack is sensible "tactics" to be applied in the "real" world- especially at the strategic decision making level where it really counts. We need to change attitudes, and the consequent under management of the situation- we need to recognise the complexity and we need to end the 'displacement activity' of more and more policy papers and initiatives etc I think what I am reading is that we need to market what we already have better?

Jon Hobbs
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Edgar Goell, Social Scientist and Future Researcher (Cairo/Egypt & Berlin/Germany)

Dear colleagues,

Having now read all contributions of our debate I have the same feeling as regarding Sustainable Development: it is overwhelming. And it will be hard for the moderators and editors later on “to reduce complexity” most adequately – I wish you good luck.

These are my priority aspects – referring to several contributions made and to some of the questions posed.

(1) After more than 30 years of scientific discourse about SD it seems to me contradicting and plainly wrong to use “economic growth” as a goal within that great framework. There are so many analyses about all the negative and destructive effects and connotations, that we should leave this ideology to conservative traditionalists. In my understanding, the use of “Sustainable Development” overcomes any concept of growth – or do we want propose “cancerous”. Economy for our limited Earth? [see for a new explanation Thomas Prugh: “Green Economics”: Turning Mainstream Thinking on Its Head“ – February 15, 2008, <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/5623>]

(2) A first necessary (although not sufficient) basic step to come closer to SD is to understand, what is NOT SD. Based on my experience all conceptual and practical activities for SD have to start with concrete and urgent problems, have to do with reflecting the (all) effects of our activities – be it personal (consumer, producer), organisational (factory, offices, schools, administrations) or national/international level. The imperative should be: understand the effects of your action and your in-action, understand the logic of this behaviour, the thinking patterns! And then: think, whether you can continue, or if you rather should look for alternatives. There should be more confrontations with the (often) unintended effects of everyday activities – maybe directly from people of the “South” (Pacific islands, Africa etc. linking it to our Western life style) supported by Northern NGOs etc. many people need not to read books but need some seeds of thought, some positive and thoughtful provocation (“cognitive dissonance”) – and help to find real alternatives.

(3) Related to this topic it is of major importance to make clear, that the “American Way of Life” is NOT sustainable – on many grounds, primarily on environmental grounds: each average US-citizen uses 6 times more resources than it can rightfully use (if all resources of this planet are allocated equally). That means: the Western Capitalist societies have to change very fast in the direction of SD, instead of trying to tell all other countries to follow their destructive path (via powerfull advertisement industry and commercial mass media). The “image” of Hollywood is stronger than ever, and relies very much on the “hope” (wishful thinking) that some kind of “trickle down effect” will enable them to live like some New Yorkers or Berliners. Different societies have the right and should get the opportunity to search for their own specific paths of development. They do not need to repeat and imitate the (somehow deadly) mistakes of the Western Capitalist countries – we only have one planet. Of course, there can and should be some “leap-frogging” (i.e. mobile phone instead of landline phones, renewable energy instead of burning oil). But fortunately, the spectrum for development – within the “corridor” of SD – is quite broad (including Bhutan’s goal of “Gross National Happiness” as societal target instead of GNP!).

(4) Very many contributions to this discussion mentioned political “will” and “willingness” as major factor for real changes. From my experience in several countries I agree strongly. Then the question/task for us follows: how can we create and increase “the willingness” of people to do something or to do much more? Before starting any action it therefore is necessary to analyse and try to understand the mind set, cognitive frame, interests, motivations, aspirations, fears, sensitivities of decision makers and (potential) partners! For different situations there are different solutions/tactics, just to mention a few: challenge decision makers with good practice from colleagues of other communities or countries (“peers”), present very concrete alternatives, get support from authorities or even celebrities or external powers, ask for responsibilities and accountability of specific decision-makers, mobilize the young generation to express their concerns about their (!) future, produce pressure from interest groups and constituencies (“create other incentive structures” for different groups of people and decision-makers). There are enough concepts and tools out there, we need to bring decision-makers and citizens to “ask for” and to “use” them.

(5) Since 1992 many heads (sic!) of state signed the Agenda 21 they implicitly acknowledged that they do not follow a SD strategy. This is a point for questioning their legitimacy. We more often should confront decisions-makers with “business as usual” – scenarios, make clear to them and the citizens what effects and costs are connected to that non-sustainable way of development, if it would be continued into the future. For instance use the logic of Prof. Stern (UK) to measure the costs of today’s non-action for the future (costs will increase enormously). If we confront decision-makers with that kind of “outlook”, it will be hard for them to find arguments for continuing their old way of decision-making. Here comes into play the question of integrating the 3 pillars of SD: administrative structures and systems have to be changed and can be changed – and work much more efficient for SD. Example: some of the National SD Councils in EU-countries are doing a quite good job!

(6) From the German experience (national SD-strategy) many of my points can be underlined. Activities concerning SD started in 1993 mainly on local levels. But step by step more “social and political capital” was accumulated by mobilizing ever more target groups, even people within local, regional and national administrations and governments. Every ecological catastrophe, every technological inventions, every report, every inability of old politics to solve problems was used to increase the support for a change towards SD. But at the same time, when more and more groups participated, some had very distorting “ideas” about SD, using it as label, practicing only “symbolic politics”. And the goals set by the government in their first SDS were very vague. Therefore one major challenge is now and in the future to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of the SDS – in order to make it an dynamic improvement process, a positive “spiral” for optimizing SD-activities, increasing their effectiveness. A short while ago the government of The Netherlands was even publishing an innovative “peer review” about the effects of its SDS, conducted by several high ranking national and foreign experts, who came up with very challenging but helpful suggestions and recommendations!

(7) On the global level there needs to be a strengthening of institutions which are advocating SD in their sectors. And there definitely needs to be the creation of a powerful UN SD Council (with at least the same powers as WTO!) - as in the beginning of our debate was also asked for (good and realistic models are existing, like that from Prof. U.E. Simons).

(8) Comparing what activities are urgently needed with what has been done and gained so far, can be frustrating and depressing. Yet, the task we are facing today has historical dimensions: never before during the long ongoing proves of civilization has there been a time when humankind was asked to limit itself, in the opposite: each nation, each corporation, each human being was

struggling “for more”. This time is over. Now we have to think much more about “quality”: make it possible for all. This will take some time. But since it is so important, we have to make smart steps as fast as possible. This discussion might ad some input and impulses for this supreme goal.

Thank you for your attention!
Edgar Göll

Edgar Goell
Social Scientist and Future Researcher
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Mimi Zarina Azmin, Director of Business Development, Malaysia

Dear Concerned Citizens of the World,

As much as my company is a private entity and a mere fertiliser distributor, we have always strived to give back to society in one way or another in each and every of our business endeavours, pushing for capacity building amongst women in the rural areas, designing community farms in order to achieve economies of scale, etc- things that we are not obligated to bother with from the business viewpoint, yet are very much our responsibilities from the socio-economic development viewpoint. Talking from first hand experience, it is a hard one to swallow when I realised that as much as sustainable development is a crucial matter of high importance for my team and I, this same sense of purpose is not commonly shared.

For Malaysia, I take as an example the agricultural sector, which is often viewed as a sunset industry and thus receive little interest and participation from the young generation. Years of focusing on the manufacturing and services sectors were done at the price of the agricultural sector, whereby good agricultural practice (GAP) is not widely known, what more practiced as a norm. As a result, the most basic component in agriculture, the soil quality, has taken a nosedive in the past decade or so, with acute soil depletion and issues such as dead soil and high-acidity being common especially in the paddy-planting region and the palm oil estates. Yield has been consistently decreasing year by year, and for palm oil, the same trend is identified in the oil extraction rate (OER).

Furthermore, in view of the global concerns with regards to food-security and the need to be self-sufficient, Malaysia belatedly realise its shortcomings and now faces a myriad of issues that it needs to tackle, some of which were tackled long ago by neighbouring nations in similar stages of development. In terms of exports, for example, it faces barriers to entry because of poor product traceability and accountability on the part of the farmers and planters.

After observing the neighbouring Thais' success, new policies have been drafted and it is an ambitious yet workable one. But looking at output without reviewing the input is a sure fire way to failure, example- it does not take much to switch products to better quality and more suitable ones, which do not harden the soil in the long run. Nor are we lacking in terms of budget and funds, with billions of tax-payers money allocated for the development of the nation's agricultural sector. There is nothing complicated with the term – what you take from the soil, you must put back.

The most crucial driving force behind the success of achieving sustainability ultimately lies in the hands of those at the grass root level. Beautifully drafted policies, intricate work of arts that they may be, can never work without effective implementation and monitoring taken into consideration. Policy-makers can scratch their heads and ponder all they want, but if the same awareness that their economic activities bear negative impact on their environment and the need for change are not felt by those at the grass root level, be it the households or the officers tasked with implementing the various programmes for policy-change, policy will forever remain two-dimensional on paper alone.

It is the culture of the society, and the mindset of the people that will ultimately make or break the endeavours towards achieving sustainable development. This is a dilemma that is prevalent throughout the various sectors, beyond the agricultural sector. The former Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed, repeatedly lamented the stubborn mindset and lackadaisical attitude that hampered effective implementation of many policy changes. And rightfully so. Content with the here and now, many snubs the talk of long-term effects and “preparing for tomorrow” that was advocated. Every cent in extra expenditure and every minute of extra effort are scrutinised, and many just cannot be bothered to trouble themselves with changing their set ways for the sake of tomorrow and the future generations; despite the promise of that extra in quality.

Changes happen at a snail’s pace because the mindset are not ready to accept the facts driving the policy changes towards sustainable development, or they sometimes do not happen at all because of the meltdown at the grass root level. In pursuit of better standards of living, many forget the quality of living. Fuelled further by greed and corruption, achieving sustainability is much harder than it seems for a country that appears to be healthily developing on the surface.

In order to achieve sustainable development, irregardless of a country’s developmental stage, it is not so much about policies drafted be it for environmental, economical, agricultural and etc; as it is about the agent of change itself- the people. For Malaysia, one may applaud the policies, but until greater public awareness, change of mindset, deeper sense of accountability and unity in priorities are solidified; the applause is short-lived.

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Joseph Marquez Aquino, Executive Director, Institute for Social Change and Urban Development (ISCUD), Inc, Philippines

Questioning the Questions?

"Sustainable Development" is a contradiction between "sustainability" and "development" within the current trend of dominant social paradigms, if the objective is the resolve that the world equally belongs to everyone or and should secure human (re)development.

"External paradigmatic challenge" (perceiving outside the existing system) to the contradiction raises the question for ending the plights of poverty within the system where the total combined asset of dying and poorest half (1/2) of world population is less than the combined asset of around only 400 individual multi-billionaires.

"Internal paradigmatic challenge" (perceiving within the existing system) to the contradiction raises the question for implementing the reform concepts explicit in UN policy papers, in order to at-least mitigate (but not eliminate) the (un) sustainable development.

Mitigating Unequal/Sustainable Human (Un) development

Diagnosis for effecting mitigation:

- The world or UN policies and implementation of policies by member nations and its affiliate development organizations can "mitigate the unequal/sustainable human (un)development" unless they will remain strong only in papers and in conferences rather than in schemes localized in the grassroots.
- The implementation of policies in every country is never designed for localization and decentralization at the grassroots or lowest level of governance. In the Philippines, as an example, the national government designs development projects and programs at the top level or worst, the national government imposes projects and programs to the Local Government Units (LGUs).
- The UN development bodies and affiliate organizations provide only token mechanisms and assistance of direct involvement with the LGUs. UN policy implementation structures of mechanisms and assistance are focused at the country and national government level which are inapplicable to the local communities or the countryside and always beset by partisan political kings and centralized graft and corruption.

Prognosis for effecting mitigation:

- The UN policies for development implementation should (re)devise, (re)design and (re)divert the structures, mechanism and assistance for direct implementation of projects at the smallest local communities and local governance. Design for country level should be coordinative and facilitative for integrating the local developments towards country priority directions, but should start where the people are and the crucial needs of local communities - which should emphasized both the immediate and the long-term local situations and priority plans including available local community resources, technology and potentials.
- The UN policy papers and assistance should also (re)devise, (re)design and (re)divert research and compliance of UN member countries and affiliate development organizations into localized structures, mechanism and assistance.

Components of Planning, Implementing and Monitoring Localization

It is recommended by this e-discussion contribution that a countrywide "unified coordinative/facilitative template" should also design some major components of planning, implementation and monitoring, which should at least include the following components:

PHASES-OD:

P-H-A-S-E-S of LOCALIZATION	
Minimum	Maximum
Participatory consultation in local governance	Participation in local governance
Human development	Humanitization of development
Asset reform	Asset redistribution
Social protection	Socialized protection

Employment and Livelihood	Employment by micro-enterprise/entrepreneurships
Special cross-sector concerns	Social sectors (re)integration
Organizational Development	Organizational Decentralization

Postscript of the questioning questions:

- The recommendation for "internal paradigmatic challenge" (planning, implementing and monitoring within the existing system view) can only mitigate (but not eliminate) the effects of unequal and (un)sustainable development; but such mitigation may help (re)assess the view that what the world needs is not just reformation but total transformation that could only be truly and honestly perceived from the "external paradigmatic challenge" (perceiving outside the existing system).
- Perhaps, the practical transcendence of "questioning the questions" is the transformation of the dominant existing social paradigm through transcending development questions into basic food, clothing and shelter of at least 1/3 of the population of the world.
- The UN and its affiliate development practitioners will never completely understand nor accept the said "questioning the questions" if policies remained at the papers and conferences and without direct mechanisms, structures and assistance with local communities and smallest units of local governance.
- Impractical and bulky work may become the quick response of traditional development practitioners in the UN and its affiliates; but the world crises and the MDG (Millennium Development Goals) targets will never be achieved by year 2015 if the questions posed are only of such convenience of armchair hegemonic accommodations.

Joseph Marquez Aquino

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Varsha Ajmera, World Youth Foundation, Malaysia

Dear Moderator,

Most of the time sustainable development policies fail because they are not sustainable. In many cases policy makers make the policy without including the grassroots realities about the communities. In some countries they have the best researched SD policy but the implementation mechanisms are weak. There should be a good strategy and a strong implementation plan if we want to make it successful. Poor planning, lack of awareness, poor implementation, and lack of funds are some of the causes of policy failure.

The community too is not involved at the decision making processes. Many young people don't even know what sustainable development means. Education on environment conservation and protection should be taught in schools and curriculum needs to be developed reflecting the local environment.

Hence to achieve the best results I think all stakeholders should be included in the planning and decision making process. The community and the young people should be educated on SD as they are the ones who are going to "make it happen".

Failure in doing so may result in the three pillars i.e. economic growth, social development and environmental protection may not achieve its objectives.

Ms Varsha Ajmera
World Youth Foundation, Malaysia

Bertha Garcia Cienfuegos, Regional Association of Engineer Women, Tumbes - Peru

Dear Colleagues

Congratulation for a successful discussion.

It's a very good opportunity to understand different views on sustainable development raised by different colleagues from all over the world. It is of very interest, particularly for me, who lives in a remote area; Tumbes, located in north of Peru, near equatorial line, exactly International Basin Puyango - Tumbes.

Reasons for failure in Sustainable development

- The government is interested in natural resources and ecosystem protection but it did not happen due to politics
- Besides there are issues of deforestation and agricultural land management in protected areas

National sustainable development strategy

The governments is in the process of conceptualizing the final stages of its National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD), The NSSD identifies a number of priority areas for strategic intervention, sets out a framework for implementation, and proposes a collaborative effort to elaborate a detailed Action Plain.

Sincerely

Ing. Bertha Garcia Cienfuegos
Regional Association of Engineer Women
Tumbes - Peru

Nzoa Gervais, CAALD Coordinator

Dear Members,

Sustainable global health, as an integral part of the UN millennium Development Goals (MDGs), plays a key role for global stability as well as for worldwide economic development and politics.

- What are the advantages of an integrated global health strategy to reach the MDGs?
- What are the risks and needs for global health in the future?
- What significance will have holistic hygiene concepts and public health strategies on global health?
- Why do we need a multi level strategy integrating education and training, family, workplace, scientists, government and private organizations?

Is global human health sustainable in the face of global environmental change, including threats to human security and the emergence of mega-cities?

How can we learn from multinational business and public private partnerships?

NZOA Gervais
CAALD Coordinator

Kodakkal Shivaprasad, General Secretary, Shimoga, India

What is the experience of the countries where SD strategies have been adopted?

- Financial constraints remain to be a major obstacle for the governments to pursue sustainable development.
- Even when some funds are available, there are some abuses of funds at the local level and sometimes, conflicts of interests amongst political parties prevent sound implementation.

Key elements of strategies:

- A holistic approach with a wide range of community involvement is essential for preparing as well as implementing strategies. The involvement of vulnerable people, including the disabled, is also absolutely necessary.

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Dated: February 24, 2008

Aminul Islam, UNDP Bangladesh

Dear Colleagues,
Greetings from UNDP, Bangladesh!

I find much pleasure to share my comments on this important debate by responding the following questions:

1. What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?

The main barrier is to meet country's capability to coordinate across sectors, by linking up with initiatives as diverse as rural and urban poverty reduction, food security, environmental sustainability, disaster management, and local governance. Integration of these initiatives is the main challenge for the objectives of sustainable development. Strategic alliances and partnerships with national and local government, local people, private sector, civil society and development partners will also be essential. There is a lack of need responsive strategy which can address weaknesses in governance wherein the integration of social, economic and environment is not given due weight in central decision making, and policies and implementation are rarely harmonised. The strategy will strengthen the capacity and role of local government, and will help local people establish the understanding, trust, and rights that can rejuvenate inclusive growth with sustainable natural resources management. The diverse and vibrant civil society sector will be involved to complement other stakeholders, and to change attitudes among industry. Corporate social and environmental responsibility will be encouraged through partnership development. In brief following are the barriers which need attention:

- There is no effective forum in National government for mainstreaming pro-poor economic growth, social development, environment and climate change to carry out national sustainable development;
- Sectoral development approach with line ministries and agencies: institutional conflicts, limited capacity, rent seeking and weak enforcement;
- Centralized authority and Local Government: lack of decentralization, limited capacity
- Limited public involvement and access to information;
- Civil society: diverse and fragmented;
- Private sector: limited incentives and motivation

2. How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level?

Although attempt is made for sustainable development to be “mainstreamed” in development assistance framework, only a few development partners are currently addressing some of the critical issues in natural resource management and environmental governance. The policy instruments for development planning towards achieving sustainable development may focus on five challenges in a coordinated fashion : (i) strengthening environmental governance for supporting policy analysis and implementation, devolution of power to local government bodies thus helping to create means of access of the poor and women to common property resources, legal and regulatory framework for environmentally sustainable development; (ii) energy for sustainable development through energy efficiency, promoting renewable energy and promoting clean energy; (iii) reducing local as well as global risk due to climate change through in global negotiations and mainstreaming risk management in national planning with emphasis on adaptive capacity building; (iv) contributing to the maintenance of global life support system and strengthening national capacity in “bio-security” including bio-technology, biodiversity and food security and (v) policy advocacy and strengthening national capacity on disaster management and risk reduction with emphasis on paradigm shift in disaster management programming efforts from a response and relief emphasis to comprehensive risk management culture.

3. How can our organizations and each of us most effectively support countries in leaning from the practices of those countries that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development?

Sustainable development with focus on inclusive growth with strengthening local governance and environmental sustainability from the perspective of Bangladesh’s approach is to define sustainability in a comprehensive assistance package that addresses the backward-forward linkages and cross-sectoral and thematic issues required to achieve community empowerment and environmental sustainability. Physical development including infrastructure and growing settlement exerts an enormous pressure on the scarce natural resources in the country and it is a dire necessity to address issues of sustainable natural resource management with equity and justice. Appropriate policy and approaches are advocated through UNDP as felt necessary to strengthening local governance and address natural resource management and the awareness and motivation for this is growing. In response to this national need for community based natural resources management aimed at achieving poverty reduction as well as environmental sustainability, UNDP Bangladesh is contributing in shaping the national policies on good governance, pro-poor environment friendly economic growth, biodiversity, land use, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), waste management (both urban and clinical) and renewable energy.

Thanks and regards,

Aminul Islam
Assistant Country Director
(Environment & Sustainable Development)
UNDP, Bangladesh

Heiner Benking, Board Member and European Representative of IHTEC.org (ECOSOC and DSED) (Berlin and Toronto)

Dear colleagues,

I feel humbled and honoured to be asked to add my views to this prestigious eDiscussion enterprise where policy makers and leaders look into not just devising regional, national, local plans and programmes, but care for the global whole and alternative futures.

We used with a G7 - EEES Environmental Experts of the Economic Summit and later UNEP mandate and project from the 70ies (meta-data Environmental Information Harmonization Project) managed by UNEP-HEM in Munich in the late 80ies/early 90ies) the governing citation "Much is known, unfortunately in different heads". So what? How can we make a difference by learning from each other and old and new "other" approaches and bring them down to earth? In this UNEP project I learned that there are so many lessons learned and good news, but the access, bridging and digestion is missing and little is put into action. With these views and experience I read the contribution in this eDiscussion very carefully, but have little time on the last day (AMR, section I May 22) to respond, but will update this collection, as a co-laboratory work hopefully elsewhere.

1) Here are my conclusions and recommendations in a nutshell:

Subsuming and resonating with the contributions in the eDiscussion makes one feel down. The danger is to get stuck with pointing at what is wrong, with lamenting and analysis, but not moving on to new frontiers, synthesis and therapy and positive outlooks which keep "realities", contexts, and episodic and epochal changes in mind. It seems to be fashionable now to speak about holistic and deep-ecology. But is meant and understood and goes beyond plastic words (empty words without meaning more miss-used than used in edutainment, politainment, and modern "science". We tried some systemic clarification in this ongoing Wholeness Seminar.

Only few people are used to and dare to step back and try to confront the issues and consequences at stake from a birds-eye view and with faceted eyes. (Pls. see "House of Eyes" and World-House as oikos, ecumene, eudomy) [more].

Since C. West Churchman, we are aware of the "enormous problems" and neglect and ignoring any alternative, new and old, systemic approaches.

What is missing seems to be an orientation in "common frames of references", unifying multi-modal visions, and an integration of sign and cultural systems, concerted efforts for positive outcomes, including the beauty of difference and the minority views. Please [see more].

Many contributions wholeheartedly and with much merit and sincere effort try to confront and tackle one issue or element, and all too often argue for fashionable new terms and approaches. But what we learned from Noel Brown, UNEP-RONA was that for Rio '92 there was no talk about Agenda 21, Biodiversity or Climate Conventions, but that some original ideas at that time were to step back and confront the whole and the commons from a higher stand. Same as the founders of general system sciences repeatedly highlighted that for their subject area nobody feels "in charge" – as nobody is trained for the broader issues that connect.

At UN-CSD-15 last summer we created an ad-hoc side-event to revisit international environmental gatherings: Stockholm 1972, Hamburg 1988, Rio 1992, Berlin 1995, and more. With people who had been there and "in charge" for certain aspects in certain functions at that times. Some of us thought that all this "new" is not really making enough progress and much of the "old think" is lost or forgotten. I opt for a combination and to venture a little into the impossible as the perplexity in view of this complexity is blinding us and dumping us down.

“The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible”.
Arthur C. Clarke

So let us start with revisiting and tackling some old maybe lost opportunities: See below: * enormous problems" and a unifying framework, * inter-sectoral strategic dilemma & groupthink and spreadthink *) harmonisation of environmental data, ... and then explore and propose some more comprehensive "out of the box" thinking and paradigm mapping and shared dialog and decision culture approaches as we need to go beyond without losing touch and ground. So what we will do in 5) and 6) is revisit the general model theory (UNESCO 1964) and sign theory C.S. Peirce and see how that can help us to use other ways to communicate, construct, and share "realities".

Finally, all the perspective outlooks building blocks below need to be combined to go beyond a certain signs, symbols, meanings, disciplines, languages, cultures, scales ... if we want to take the "Rio '92 mandate" of "common frames of references" for real and shared scales, proportions, consequences and actions – And look into truthing and fidelity, what and how we can communicate and share, and how we can avoid the Charlatan comparison of the incompatible. See proposal below for the Euro-Mediterranean region Anna Lindh Foundation (References below) and the need to have not just ecological resource or consumption "footprints", but fidelity and repeatability of densities and how they overlap and interact. (see A) the Retrospective of the Predicament of Mankind Club of Rome report below).

2) Resources:

Maybe visit beforehand this article for Lynton Caldwell's "Is Humanity destined to self-destruct" with the title "Show or Schau"? APLS Politics and Life Sciences, 2000 or start directly with the "building blocks" A) – N) below:

A) "enormous problems" and a unifying framework (Churchman, Ozbekhan, Warfield, Christakis)

The "enormous problems" of Churchman became the "Problematique" of Ozbekhan, and remerged as the science of generic design of Warfield and the Structured Dialogic Design Process (SDDP) of Christakis, representing a continuum of systems thinking with the common vision to engage stakeholders in addressing the Predicament of Humankind through participative democracy.

See Club of Rome's Predicament of Mankind (PDF) 1970 and a Retrospective Structural Inquiry of the Predicament of Humankind: Prospectus of the Club of Rome, 2004, Harness Collective Wisdom, 2004

B) UNU and UIA prep-work for Rio'92, see: Anthony Judge inter-sectoral strategic dilemma, The Encyclopedia of World Problems, Human Potential, Actions, Options, Strategies (see: documents relating to World Problems 1971-2006) and IBIS (Kunz/Rittel) Vicious Problem Cycles and the Quality of Statements, and the International Encyclopedia of Systems and Cybernetics (more below).

C) CAPACITY TO GOVERN, Yehezkel Dror, Club of Rome Report 1995, extra summary points at UN Climate Summit 1995, Berlin to include inter-sectoral strategic dilemma and common frames (recommendation 6 and 7) * Research into spatial metaphors supporting local and global governance by enabling understanding of intersectoral strategic dilemmas of action and results chains in a symbolic and trans-cultural form, for shared exploration of issues and evaluation of proportions and consequences with differentiation between data, conjectures and 'noise' in policy

information. * Further development of a conceptual superstructure as a reference paradigm to ease access to salient data while avoiding unnecessary redundancy and overloads. [more]

D) Cyberculture, UNESCO Culture of Peace, Humane Information Society 1992 -2008 [more]

E) General Model Theory UNESCO and Herbert Stachowiak - Create and move boundaries in agreed upon shared realities and virtualities (general model theory).

F) EXPO 2000, concepts behind the Visitors Information System for world exhibitions and the Global Dialogues, Hannover, Germany, See Expo-Info-2000.

G) EFFE und Multi-Media – Tangible Education From the Senses to Meaning, Reason, and Sensibility - From Culture to Cyberculture?

H) Knowledge Organisation and Navigation, and Metaphors, see Dahlberg (ISKO), Judge, UIA (above), Veltman, MMI, and the work of the author. Pls. see ISKO, infoterm, SUMS.

I) Paradigm Mapping and Out of the Box Thinking Seminars developed by Kurt Hanks for foreign students in the US and widely applied to relate positions, viewpoints, assumptions and learn to see, relate and combine with "other eyes/models".... (call it mental mobility and the negotiation of different schemas. See: Sharing and Changing Realities with Extra Degrees of Freedom of Movement (Fig. 1, 2, 6).

J) INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM SCIENCES ENCYCLOPEDIA and outlook by the editor in chief Charles François when introducing the 2nd edition AND the contribution of NEW TERMS like cognitive panorama" and "mental models" by the author and contributions in the 5 volumes: The Future of Higher (Lifelong) Education: For All Worldwide: A Holistic View

K) GLOBAL EMBODIED COVENANT - see EARTH CHARTA open-space presentation, TEC presentation, and GEIG (IUCN – WHO – etc.)....

L) Future of Modern Media and Data, ICSU CODATA (1992-2006), see also Systems and Sign Theory 2006 and Quo vadis Cybernetics ?

M) Earth Literate Leaders and Modern Media & Maps & Models – see Map Analphabetism and UNESCO's Literacy programmes. About World Map truth, truthing, fidelity and visual demagogy in computer graphics and visualisation. See LITERACY – FLAT WORLDS and the models and cosmologies connected to it, and what it means to ecological footprints and thematic density maps, and the relation and overlap of issues. See here the problem maps of the Club of Rome's Predicament above (Christakis).

N) Proposal for Anna-Lindh-Foundation, European – Mediteranian Countries, Berlin-Alexandria 2008. Transcultural Dialog and Peace-Making
Roundtable learning from experience during the last 40 years and new ideas

3) Stumbling blocks preventing true dialog, peace-making, and reconciliation:

1) We fight over words but do not check the meaning,

2) We do not question and compare the values attached to statements and attitudes,

3) We do not contextualize and embody concepts and meaning, do not check the sectors, regions, scales, proportions and consequences of alternative actions,

4) We do not give voice, empower, listen, cherish and cultivate difference or variety in dialog and decision making,

5) Disorientation and dumbing-down in Cyberculture and a miss-administered and misunderstood, intangible "Globalisation / Glocalisation": Where we get overloaded by communication noise (sign/symbol melange) and media demagoguery which means: no trust and fidelity in the statements and no ways and means to check the credibility and impact/relevance, and get lost between the scales, brackets, and sectors.

6) The above incompatibility and incomparability opens the door for over-claims and oversimplifications. Leaders use intangible jargon (plastic-words), neglect impacts and avoid instead of exploring differences and alternatives.

Whoever imagines mental barriers
which actually do not exist
and then thinks them away, has understood the world.
As space is entrapped in geometry's network of lines,
thought is caught in its (own) inherent laws.
Maps make the world comprehensible to us;
we are still waiting for the star-maps of the spirit.
In the same way that ambling through fields
we risk getting lost, the spirit negotiates its terrain.

Friedrich Rückert, Wisdom of Brahmins

4) Postscript:

There is no doubt that we have ventured into new realms of realities and possibilities, but are stuck in old ways and means. Some say we should venture into "new thinking" some believe in the old and traditional, but all this are one-way orientations which can only blind us and prohibit going into the lateral, the across, the other, and the beyond. Why not consider Maps and Models "Supersigns" L) – instead of fighting over words, labelling living things into dichotomies or grids, fighting for "mine" or "yours", forgetting the other, and building walls between symbols and images?

This collection is a quick attempt between "Clubs", "Times", "Disciplines", Languages and Signs. It is not meant to be complete or final – just another piece to add onto more comprehensive and tolerant views, approaches, communications, and actions. For the author Space, Scale (with proportions and consequences), Sign Systems, and the issue of outline, overview, and orientation are most critical items in times of over-claims and over-simplifications.

The author works the last 20 years on education, working with youth and promoting Energy and Education Round-Tables in Germany and Canada. This is his first quicky "5 cents" on boundaries, semiphors, vistas, transcendence, and challenges. He hopes that the AMR eDiscussion contributions will be available online. Add-ons will make this piece a "living" document, which can be improved and expanded through the times at this site:
www.quergeist.net/AMR-2008/

Please excuse my "Krauts"-English - without Editor and proof-reading- in these seasons and hours of the times....

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Madame Rachel Mamba, Membre du Comité de Direction du Réseau International pour la Diversité Culturelle, Central African Republic

English Translation Follows

Nous vous remercions de bien vouloir nous accorder cette opportunité de participer à la discussion du forum sur " le Développement durable"

Le Développement durable s'entend par l'amélioration des conditions de vie, le progrès réalisé par une population, une société ou une communauté donnée pour une durée illimitée.

En effet, tous les pays n'ont pas le même niveau du développement. Les pays développés dits industrialisés ont atteint un niveau élevé, tandis que les pays à une économie émergente sont en voie du développement, moins encore les 3/4 des pays Africains perturbés par des crises et des conflits connaissent un retard considérable en ce qui concerne leur croissance économique.

La première partie de notre discussion porte sur les défis auxquels se heurtent les pays en intégrant les objectifs de croissance économique, le développement social et la protection de l'environnement.

La croissance économique ne peut être effective que si tous les secteurs d'activité sont intégrés dans les stratégies nationales du développement car ils sont liés et représentent un intérêt capital pour l'économie.

La catégorie des pays qui connaissent des troubles sociaux politiques, le cas de la République Centrafricain bénéficient souvent des programmes post conflit axés sur la reconstruction accuse un retard considérable dans leur croissance économique.

Pour ce faire, il serait important d'insérer dans ces programmes les autres secteur clés du développement tels que : le Développement rural, la Culture qui est la base de la cohésion sociale, le Tourisme, l'environnement, la sécurité qui est aussi cruciale, le secteur des industries etc etc ...

Plusieurs conférences ont lieu sur la culture et la plus récente est celle tenue à l'UNESCO le 20 Octobre 2005 lors de laquelle a été adoptée la convention sur la protection, la promotion de la diversité des expressions culturelles.

A cet effet, un accens particulier mérite d'être mis sur la Culture qui est toujours releguée au second rang alors que c'est une potentialité que dispose tous les pays,pour qu'elle soit compétitive sur le marché, il suffit de l'intégrer dans les strtégies du développement, elle contribuera au developpement économique. Les valeurs culturelles qui ne tarissent jamais et se transmettent de générations en générations.

Le défi à relever du côté social nécessite est de garantir la sécurité des populations, l'appui des organisations non gouvernementales qui sont plus proches des populations et sont constituées des acteurs du développement. Comment ces structures peuvent-elles être efficaces si elles ne sont pas soutenues par des programmes surtout le renforcement des capacités humaines et financières ? si la plupart des financements sont orientés aux gouvernements.

Egalement la prise en compte du Genre s'avère nécessaire pour la participation des femmes dans tous les programmes du développement, ainsi que l'appui du système judiciaire pour une justice équitable des citoyens.

L'environnement constitue une potentialité des ressources naturelles que disposent tous les pays mais il se pose un réel problème dans la protection et gestion quand la communauté locale n'est impliquée. Il serait important de développer un partenariat participatif avec les populations de ces ressources avec un planning d'exploitation et de reconstitution de ces ressources en ce qui concerne particulièrement le bois.

Voilà ma participation à la première partie de cette discussion et je vous en souhaite bonne réception.

English Translation

We wish to thank you for the opportunity given to us to share our views on the "eDiscussion on Sustainable Development"

Sustainable development implies the improvement of living conditions, the progress achieved by a given population, society or community over an unlimited time span.

Indeed, all countries do not enjoy the same level of development. Developed or industrialized countries have reached a high level, whereas emerging countries are in the process of developing, and at an even lower level the 3/4 of African countries plagued by war and strife are lagging far behind as concerns their economic welfare.

The first part of our debate focuses on the challenges facing these countries when they try to streamline economic growth targets, social development and environment protection.

Economic growth cannot be achieved unless all activity sectors are integrated into national development policies because they are linked together and constitute a vital interest for the economy.

The batch of countries which are politically unstable, the case of the Central African Republic, and which often benefit from post war programs that are geared towards reconstruction, show a significant delay in their economic growth.

To catch up, it is fundamental that other key development sectors such as Rural development, Culture, which is the basement for social cohesion, Tourism, Environment, security which is also vital, industry, & so on, be brought into these programs.

Several conferences are held on the theme of culture, the most recent being the one held at UNESCO on the 20th of October 2005 during which the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions was adopted.

In that respect, a special emphasis should be put on Culture which is always relegated to second rank when for any country it is an asset; to make it more competitive on the market, you only need to embed it into development policies and it will add to economic expansion. Cultural values never dry up and they seep down over generations.

On the social front the necessary challenge is to safeguard the security of persons and the support to non governmental organisations that are closer to communities and are made up of development stakeholders. How can these bodies be effective if they are not backed by programs, especially as regards human and financial capacity building? if most of the funding goes to government?

In addition, taking gender into account is a prerequisite for the inclusion of women in development programs, as well as support to the judiciary for a fair legal system for all citizens.

Environment is a reservoir of natural resources for all countries but there is a real problem in terms of protection and management whenever local communities are involved. It would be important to develop a collaborative partnership with the communities holding these resources including a planning for exploitation and reconstitution of those resources, especially as regards timber.

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