

**BEST PRACTICES ON INTEGRATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE
INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

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BEST PRACTICES ON INTEGRATING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE INTO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG 1:

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Executive Summary

It is imperative that we focus on the role of Nature in our efforts to implement and achieve the SDGs, as the following three reasons describe.

1. The prosperity and well being of all peoples and of our global economies depend on the health and well being of Nature and on the continued abundant availability of Earth's natural resources.
2. Nature provides the ideal model of sustainable development.
3. Learning from Nature will help us to live in greater harmony with all other forms of life on earth as well as enable us to better maintain sustainable planetary boundaries.

Nature has developed amazing biodiversity over the course of earth's four billion years, despite recurrent ice ages, atmospheric catastrophes, and countless natural cataclysms. Yet at this critical juncture in history, we are faced with human activities that are contributing to irreparable planetary changes at a rate that is transgressing the very boundaries necessary to support human life. And, these same human activities are creating diverse forms of poverty that keep too many people on the edge of survival, living in poor health and financial impoverishment in environmentally degraded communities.

The term *Nature* refers to one interdependent Earth System comprised of integrally interspersed spheres—including the hydrosphere, geosphere, atmosphere and biosphere. The systems that make up these various spheres are constantly interacting and affecting each other, creating continuous dynamic change in every aspect of the Earth System. While we have differentiated and categorized these as individual "elements" or "parts", the truth is that none of them can be isolated from the rest.

Humans' mental capacities for rational analysis, procedural thinking, future planning, and creative innovation have set us apart from other species. However, while these capacities have allowed us great creativity and fulfillment, they have also resulted in a sense of domination over the planet, creating the illusion that we are separate from the rest of life.

Our misguided attempts to live in a way that separates us from Nature and divides us from one another have led to fear and destruction of our natural environment, as well as ongoing conflict and wars with one another. We are destroying the very means to ensure our survival as well as the means to eliminate poverty.

If we are to eradicate poverty and transform our world, it is essential that we adopt a more integrated perspective that can assess the effects of isolated actions and changes on the Earth System as a whole. This will necessitate the development of greater understanding and emphasis on scientific knowledge of systems relevant to the Earth System, including living systems theory, quantum mechanics, the zero point, quantum and morphogenetic fields, as well as ancient spiritual systems.

This report focuses on systemic changes that will shift our emphasis from a divisive perspective to one of honoring that we are part of a larger whole. As you will see in the document, this change is necessary if we are to eliminate the remaining poverty that has become entrenched.

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

To end poverty in all its forms requires first an ability to focus on systemic changes that will shift our emphasis from a divisive perspective to one that honors the human species as an interdependent part of a larger whole. From a living systems perspective, humans are just one of many diverse forms of life on Earth.

There are a number of factors that keep us from accepting the fundamental truth that we are not separate from Nature, but are an integral part of the Earth system. Among them are:

1. The tendency of cultures to lose sight of the totality and focus on details in isolation.
2. Fear of reprisals that hinder poverty eradication.
3. Our emphasis on the outer/material dimension of poverty while under-emphasizing the inner/spiritual perspective that stresses connectivity.
4. The need to include *all* people in poverty eradication, including the most disenfranchised, youth, the elderly and those with disabilities.
5. The need to recognize our interdependence with Nature.
6. The interconnected, systemic basis of poverty and the need to view poverty eradication as foundational to all the SDGs.

Let us examine these points in greater detail.

1. The tendency of cultures to lose sight of the totality and focus on details in isolation.

Societies that tend to focus on details, while losing sight of the whole, exist within all nations and most sectors of their populations, regardless of wealth or class. When we lose sight of the understanding that we are integrally connected to each other and all of life, we lose our capacity to empathize and identify with one another, creating a sense that we have to “go it alone”. This sense of isolation can engender feelings of fear, suspicion, threat and scarcity, leading to a conviction that only the fittest survive.

Wars, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and even cut-throat competition are extreme forms that can develop when our feelings of fear and threat become paramount. The resulting struggle for resources destroys our means for eradicating poverty and our motivation to make the effort.

Narrow thinking is instilled from a young age by many different influences. These can include competition instilled through the grading system and hierarchy in societies; stories we tell ourselves, reinforced by advertising and the media about what constitutes success. Scarcity thinking can be compounded by the control of our economic systems by the rich and powerful—often the moneyed and corporate elite—and increased automation, with a resulting loss of jobs that grows as more people move to the cities.

All of these factors reinforce one another and result in an ever-greater separation between people, and separation between people and Nature.

2. Fear of reprisals that hinder poverty eradication.

As the illusion of separation becomes a reality in the minds of increasing numbers of people, our misunderstanding turns into maltreatment and destruction of each other and of Nature. With this we are destroying the resources so desperately needed for our ongoing survival as a species and for poverty eradication. Our fear of the “other” can keep us locked in a vicious cycle of conflict that distracts us from our larger responsibility to care for our fellow humans.

The “survival of the fittest” dynamic is indeed found in Nature, where there can be competition for sexual dominance and food. But this is seldom accompanied by the extinction of one species by another. In Nature, all members of social species find their individual place through such competition, both with regard to their own species and in the give and take between species that enables them to survive.

The conviction that only the fittest survive and the resulting atrocities that occur frequently deter both the poor and vulnerable and even those with wealth and power from attempting to change existing power structures. They comply out of fear of reprisals or, in the case of those who depend for their survival on others, out of fear of abandonment.

Nature provides many examples of how this dynamic is overcome with trust and cooperation within and between species and that there is enough for all. Here are examples from Nature that are being followed by human beings.

Possible actions to create change:

- *Educate others on how to make durable change:*
 - Teach via traditional education both about specific social, economic and political changes that have successfully taken place, *together with how and why these were successful and to which degree they were durable*. This will give people the ability to bring about constructive change and the means to do this effectively, without causing intrinsic harm to Nature or parts of society.
 - Provide information and examples on how the disenfranchised have successfully put pressure on those in power—showing how the powerful can profit from such change; through passive resistance; strikes; formation of pressure groups, such as trade unions; popular uprisings, etc. Support in learning and implementing such approaches to change can also be provided by civil society organizations with the relevant change as their objective.
- *Generate internal motivation.*

Like other species faced with challenges to their survival, humans have the capacity to tap into amazing founts of creativity and strength when their survival is at stake, as these three examples illustrate.

 - A strong lobby by the disabled in Berkeley, CA, USA, was formed when one person who was seemingly totally dependent on his official caregiver to undertake the most basic survival tasks, tapped into a huge fount of energy and creativity when he was left in the lurch once too often. Somehow, propelled by the anger he felt, he overcame

the sense of helplessness and found unexplored ways of caring for himself. He then set up self-help groups to help others with disabilities to tap into this “survival” energy; and then formed a powerful political lobby by and for the disabled.

- African countries, after decades of empty promises of development assistance, decided, without giving up on what should have been rightfully coming to them through official development assistance, to generate their own resources. They raised the interest rates offered by the African Development Bank to draw savings from the extensive African diaspora worldwide, decided to take back their natural resources from those exploiting their dependence on outside help, and among many other such actions, they created and agreed the African Sustainable Development Goals.
- Street children who were being targeted for their organs, have formed street gangs both for their day-to-day survival and to prevent this terrible practice.
- *Build on others' knowledge.*
In Nature, species learn to build on the strength of other species: they become sensitive to others' warnings of impending danger and learn by example about new tools and ways to meet their needs. Humans have this same capacity.
 - Access to the Internet is already leading to a worldwide sharing of knowledge, much of this free of charge. Once all people have access to the Internet, the poor and vulnerable and those who are dedicated to supporting them will have access to a fount of information that can help change the mindset that is sabotaging poverty eradication.
- *Support the development of individuals' personal potential.*
 - In the workplace:
 - In the business world and also in public life, more and more people are arranging their work schedules so as to find both job and personal satisfaction. In this way, workers can increase their overall sense of fulfillment for being able to better meet family needs and pursue their personal avocations.
 - In the educational system:
 - To work on poverty eradication many schools and universities have begun to get students to work on group projects together. In this way all students become teachers of other students as they share what they are doing to promote the collaboration and learn from each of their fellow students. This mutual learning process evolves as all students integrate their individual tasks to contribute maximally to the class project as a whole. This way of working can have great social benefits:
 - The complementarity of skills leads to mutual appreciation that enhances relationships between people of the same team.
 - Successful class projects, based on the collaboration between students each doing what they love to do and what they do best, can sometimes be implemented in society.

- Where people and students are asked to consider the SDGs in the implementation of such group projects, solutions can be found to the web of problems that contribute to unsustainable social relationships and relationships with Nature.

3. Our emphasis on the outer/material dimension of poverty while under-emphasizing the inner/spiritual perspective that stresses connectivity.

There is an ancient story that illustrates an important lesson about inner and outer perspectives on life. According to the story,

People once moved through life holding their head high while enjoying all of their surroundings with deep gratitude. Showered with this grateful appreciation that was ignited by all the interconnections as these were made, everyone and everything bloomed and prospered. So too did all people and Nature thrive.

One day a person discovered that by watching his feet, he was able to make faster progress. Impressed by this new way of moving, others followed suit. After a time people barely looked around or took notice of the world they lived in. All the appreciation and life enhancing relationships gradually disappeared. And so people and aspects of Nature forgot their intrinsic connectedness, and starved of life enhancing gratitude, began to hang their heads as their energy wilted away.

When we believe that only the fittest survive, we are often tempted to choose to keep our eyes on personal goals at the expense of all the enriching relationships we might have with other people and Nature.

In this way, an imbalance has developed. We tend to recognize and emphasize the eradication of outer/material/social poverty, which is most easily perceived, and we often forget that this is connected to inner/spiritual/emotional poverty. While we have been able to halve extreme poverty in the last 15 years, we find ourselves confronted by forms of poverty that are much more entrenched.

Here are two related examples of how spiritual poverty affects both human beings and nations and how this in turn sabotages poverty alleviation in both rich and poor countries.

The economies of developed countries—donor nations—are mostly debt-based. That means that banks can make loans with just as little as 10% of the amount loaned as collateral. In order to provide the loans to borrowers and make profit themselves, banks are therefore forced to foster a need to borrow among as many people as possible worldwide. So increasingly people are encouraged to go into debt.

Borrowers, in turn, are forced to make money in order to pay back their loans. The basis of advertising campaigns, as well as entertainment programming, encourage people worldwide to buy at any expense. Hearing the pervasive message brought about by these ubiquitous campaigns, many people believe that the acquisition of possessions is a way to find inner personal fulfillment. With this misguided belief, their spiritual poverty grows as they scramble increasingly for possessions in desperate but vain attempts to fill the growing inner void. Since these unsustainable consumption and production patterns exist worldwide, so too, does spiritual poverty.

Spiritual poverty leads to a feeling of "There is never enough" and the reluctance to give up possessions. And so agreements to provide help for the poor or development assistance to developing countries is experienced as an unwelcome moral imperative, often accompanied by conditions to compensate for the "loss". This can assume myriad forms, such as special mining, trading or other privileges, perks for the donor's large corporations, or political concessions. It often includes access to natural resources without regulations to safeguard the people of recipient countries nor the environment.

Developing countries sometimes have the experience of being given aid which promises attractive opportunities but which ends up being foreign to them and challenging to apply in their culture and customs. Sometimes they have the experience of violation of their natural resources, harm to their health and toxic waste left behind as consequence of a donor nation's corporations taking their natural resources without protective regulation. In this way spiritual poverty in donor (nations) leads to a deepening of spiritual poverty in the recipients.

These unsustainable patterns of production and consumption that are associated with spiritual poverty lead to a depletion of natural resources of every possible type, increased waste and other pollution and the increased destruction of the environment which is ultimately the basis for all poverty alleviation.

Today, increasingly both people and nations are seeing the economic, social and moral imperative to alleviate the poverty of others to secure their own survival. Many of these moreover experience the joy of giving of what they themselves have, regardless of any gratitude or perks they receive in return.

In Nature, such selfless giving from the heart can be compared to the way the bumble bee fulfills itself by pollinating the flowers it visits, thereby helping whole plant species to propagate and thus survive and bring great benefit to others. Such giving can be seen as giving from spiritual wealth. Here the act of both giving and receiving generates joy, providing an increase in spiritual/psychological/emotional wealth that blesses the donor as well as the recipient and tends to spill over into the environment.

This form of humanitarian giving is necessary if we are to eradicate both spiritual and physical poverty in all its forms. The focus and practice of generosity and gratitude is essential to counteract poverty and manifest natural abundance.

Is it possible to transform ways of thinking that destroy our means for poverty eradication into one that cares deeply about the well being of all people and Nature?

Fortunately, with the expansion of our commons areas and an increasingly global focus, this process is already underway. Many indigenous peoples worldwide still live in harmony with Nature. They have much to teach us all and have developed initiatives to bring back our ancient understandings. For example, the West Australian *Guardians of the Mardoowarra*, the Sacred River of Life, are pointing the way to a new sustainable economy based on living in harmony with Nature and peace between peoples. This economy is based on the stewardship of the very resources indispensable for poverty eradication, while at the same time providing hope for the indigenous Kimberley People.

Possible actions to foster an inner perspective:

- Encourage understanding of how to activate potential and find personal fulfillment:
 - In educational institutions: by introducing self-reflection in curricula; through student centered education; and group class projects where every student develops his or her own

specific skills and contributes both as student and teacher to fellow students in that school project.

- Using the media: by developing advertising that offers a truthful education on the value and uses of products and services, rather than an incitement to buy at all costs; and programming that stresses the multiple ways to find and enjoy personal fulfillment.
 - By assessing value of educational institutions and the media for their capacity to promote values based on people's combined inner and outer fulfillment.
 - By providing prizes and awards to businesses and banks that foster development not based on a debt-based system. There are a number of such banks that are run along cooperative lines: such as the Desjardins Group in Canada and Florida, community-financed banks; national banks such the Triodos and ASN Banks in the Netherlands which focus on building sustainable development.
- Provide permits for advertising and legislate severe fines for misleading and biased advertising.
 - Provide a basic income for all people. (See next section: *Build an economy of inclusiveness*).

4. The need to include *all* people in poverty eradication, including the most disenfranchised, youth, the elderly and those with disabilities.

Through our mass communications systems—travel, media, Internet—we are turning what used to be isolated territories into areas where people share a sense of belonging. Increasingly, these areas are gradually developing communal governance structures. In this way, more people are expanding an exclusive focus on their family, local or tribal social structures to also develop a national and international focus and a sense of belonging that is global.

Largely through the Internet, even national borders are disappearing, fostering communication and connection across cultural, religious, national and other divides. As with all profound changes, this virtual global connection is causing fear, distrust and conflict for some. But the development of a global commons for the benefit of all is also leading to a strengthened sense of community and the revival of a collaborative economy based on peer-to-peer sharing and partnership.

We can use this community-based consciousness and the new sharing economies that are flourishing with it to help transform divisiveness into an inclusive global culture based on the well being of all people and Nature. In time, our human predilection for connection across boundaries will help dissolve systemic resistance to poverty eradication while creating a strong foundation for dealing with poverty in all its forms.

In our efforts to eradicate poverty, we must include all people, including the poor and disenfranchised, even if it is simply to express their needs. In many cases the poor understand the predicaments other poor people face better than those who have never been confronted with poverty themselves. So it is important to enable them to share their experiences, particularly by providing worldwide access to the Internet.

People with disabilities are often looked upon as weaker than other people.

In fact, they have individually often had to develop skills and faculties to a greater degree than average extent to be able to compensate for their disability and so they often have skills and tal-

ents that excel in other areas. For instance, people whose sight is impaired have often had to develop their other senses--hearing, intuition, etc.--to an above average degree. So people with a disability could be a great asset when it comes to poverty eradication, especially if they work in groups consisting of people with diverse disabilities.

Possible actions to enlist help from people with disabilities:

- View people with disabilities as experts on how society can eradicate poverty for others with challenges similar to their own.
- Create think tanks and problem solving groups with people of diverse disabilities.
 - Such varied groups might be both sensitive to the needs of others and possibly above average when it comes to innovation and creativity.
- Draw on adaptive skills developed by people because of their disabilities.
 - For instance, the blind might be adept at visualizing solutions; those with physical handicaps may find innovative ways to overcome hurdles in the area of their disability, as do those who participate in the Para-Olympics.
- Bring together problem solving groups of youth and the aging.
 - Youth has energy and is concerned with the life ahead. And the elderly have had a lifetime of experiences. Working together, they can draw on combined capacities that are essential for developing strategies for the eradication of poverty for all parts of the population.
 - Such mixed groups can bring together lifetimes of experience and wisdom with energy, resilience, creativity, ability to work with new technologies and the interest in forward-looking strategies.- Together they can form powerful teams to deal with emerging challenges.

Possible actions to integrate the poor and most marginalized into society

- *Implement and enforce all fundamental human rights agreements; the UN Charter, and the 2030 Agenda including all the SDGs.*
- *Pass and strictly implement laws against all forms of discrimination.*
By treating people of other socio-economic backgrounds (be they richer/more powerful; or less so) with respect will enable people to learn to judge one another by their actual actions rather than through a veil of social prejudice that makes it impossible to work effectively together. This is essential to raise the motivation for poverty eradication.
- *Develop and implement laws, making it unlawful for families, caregivers and communities to neglect those who are vulnerable and bring those who are negligent of their responsibilities and duties to justice.*
- *Institute social services and other provisions within societies for the most vulnerable such as the elderly, young people, people with disabilities, and those with incomes below \$1.25 a day.* Where possible, allow those most vulnerable to take a leadership role when it comes to generating solutions for their specific needs.

- *Allow people of all socio-economic backgrounds, through access to the Internet, to share their ideas, best practices and resources freely and benefit from constructive working and learning relationships with peers worldwide.*
- *Encourage immigrants to study their native languages and cultures.*
As is already done in Canada, encourage instruction of native languages so that each culture can contribute to the cultural wealth of the communities of which they are a part. This will enable people to appreciate one another in a greater number of contexts and be more inclined to help those in poverty.
- *Focus attention at every level and in all fields of the education system, and also in the stories broadcast in the media, on the need and the interpersonal rewards of caring for the most vulnerable. Show the dominant paradigm of the “survival of the fittest” as part of the larger context of balanced give and take in Nature.*

To eradicate poverty, it is vitally important to involve all parts of the population in developing durable strategies. People with disabilities, youth, the elderly and others who are vulnerable should be embraced as valuable assets that are irreplaceable when it comes to solving problems in the areas of their own disability, *especially* when they collaborate with others with diverse talents, skills and capacities.

5. The need to recognize our interdependence with Nature.

Increasingly, people in the Industrialized world are losing the awareness that all of life, including humanity, is interconnected in the Earth System. When we consider ourselves separate from Nature, we feel less concern about critical issues affecting the world today, such as climate change, species extinction, and environmental devastation.

In order to foster a renewed recognition of humans’ integral place in the web of life and our connection to Nature, education can be a prime tool, particularly for young people currently in the school system.

Possible actions to promote education on our connection with Nature:

- Include the study of Nature within curricula of all subjects, at all school levels. For example:
 - *In Science:* holistic approaches can be emphasized and explored, such as Einstein’s $E=mc^2$ which shows that mass and energy are two aspects of the same equation; quantum mechanics which shows that once electrons have been in contact with one another, they remain in communication over time and space; chaos theory where it becomes clear that what seem to be chaotic forms (including fractals) are in fact made up of patterns that repeat themselves; the various field theories, including the zero point field, the quantum field and the morphogenetic fields; and the implicate/explicate order discovered mathematically by the late Professor David Bohm of Birkbeck College, London;. All of these help us see the world as a place where everything is connected. Once we feel connected to the world around us, fear can be transformed into a sense of con-

nection. This is crucial if feelings like empathy and caring both for our fellow human beings and Nature are to develop;

- *Environmental Education*: Activities are often included such as the "Web of Life," demonstrating how there are interconnections within nature between and among many species that are essential for their mutual well being and success.
- *Mathematics and Art*: In painting and music, mathematical relationships like the golden mean, are often found in the natural world and are associated with our sense of harmony; absence of such basic proportions are experienced as disharmony.
- *Literature*: the plot themes discussed in literature classes are often rooted in our understanding of Nature.
- *Social studies*: This subject lends itself to learning how social and economic forms (social solidarity societies, cooperatives, commons) are often based on an ecosystem approach and how the resulting sharing makes them effective for poverty alleviation. This discipline also offers the opportunity to show how human beings are integral parts of the natural ecosystem and how, as such, we benefit from all aspects of Nature.
- *Nature communication*: This subject can be integrated into the education model to arouse greater curiosity and wonder in young people's connection with Nature and the sense that even when they feel alone, they can still make connections with other living things.

6. The interconnectedness of all aspects of poverty eradication and the importance of dealing with *all* the SDGs.

Poverty is a systemic problem, the result of substandard conditions in many aspects of life. The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals point out the scope of the problems that must be addressed if we are to end poverty in all its forms. Only by making significant progress in *all* of the SDGs will we be able to eradicate poverty worldwide.

Here the United Nation's Specialized Agencies have played pivotal roles: UNESCO in the field of education, science, culture, WHO in world health, FAO in food and agriculture, ICO, IMO, ITU in mass communications and so on. The UN's 2030 Agenda, with the SDGs as its core, is having a particularly powerful influence at all levels of societies worldwide.

With the involvement of civil society, including the private sector, in implementing the SDGs, it is likely that the number and types of solutions to global problems will increase, allowing people and their leaders to share a common sense of social responsibility for all members of their respective societies. It will take involvement from every level of society to develop and sustain effective measures for poverty eradication.

Some of the most important aspects of poverty eradication involve environmental remediation of degraded ecosystems and farmlands to ensure food security for all of humanity, particularly those who depend directly on the earth for their daily living. These practices affect not only poverty eradication but other SDGs as well.

Best practices to restore the environment and local ecosystems to help eradicate poverty, while also helping to implement other SDGs:

- In rural areas that are largely dependent upon subsistence farming the economic well being of both families and communities depend on the health of the soil and local ecosystems, including hydrological systems. Given that most of the people living in rural areas depend upon subsistence farming in the developing world for their very livelihood and family incomes, it is essential that we maintain soil and plant health while increasing productivity. Given the threat to agriculture faced by many family farmers in the developing world due to climate change and global warming, it is essential that new programs and substantial increasing in funding be dedicated to supporting agro-ecology and agro-forestry practices throughout the world.
- Ninety percent of human waste flows back into the watershed untreated in the developing world. This includes a large percentage of "night soil", a valuable resource that could be composted and returned to the earth, such as is done in thousands of ecovillage communities around the world using biological waste treatment facilities and practices. Such affordable processes and practices can help produce healthy and productive soils in regions where nutrients are largely depleted and provide much needed jobs in rural communities, while helping to eliminate water-borne diseases and improve the quality of drinking water.
- Similar biological processes can make water treatment affordable in the developing world, while supporting biological systems that build up and restore soils and the natural environment, provide a habitat for aquaculture, and boost agricultural productivity.

Best agricultural practices to protect the soils and return vitality to farms and agricultural communities:

- This past year France launched its 4/1000 initiative focusing on sequestering large amounts of carbon in plants and soils while improving soil health and productivity.
- Regeneration International is pioneering new means to restore healthy ecosystems of our croplands.
- Agricultural practices are being adopted around the world that are increasing resiliency to drought and natural disasters while increasing productivity, including no till, cover cropping, mixed and rotation cropping, conservation agriculture and keyline farming.
- FAO has found organic agriculture to be 2 - 4 times as productive as conventional agriculture in the developing world and much more affordable for small scale farmers who cannot afford to import fertilizer in poor countries and regions.
- Field extension programs and increased funding for research, development, and training programs can greatly increase productivity and help to substantially decrease poverty for those most in need, particularly those dependent upon rain fed agriculture.

Indeed those most vulnerable are finding that there is a great need for restoring the natural environment. Already two-thirds of Africans face water shortages and impacts from desertification

increasingly due to climate change and global warming. Many of the deserts around the world were once forested; but as they are cut and the trees felled, it becomes increasingly difficult to regenerate them and likewise to grow crops on or near them. The fields dry out, soil fertility and ground cover are lost, and the land becomes increasingly vulnerable to run-off and floods.

Best practices to reverse land degradation and desertification:

- As has been found with the Sahara Green Wall project, it is possible to restore the natural environment in desertified regions, restore natural water cycles, increase biodiversity, and in the process create life supporting landscapes and ecosystems.
- Studies have shown that we have lost more carbon to the atmosphere since the dawn of agriculture from land degradation, destruction of the natural environment, and poor agricultural practices than from all of the fossil fuels used to date. But this loss now provides us with an enormous opportunity to re-sequester this carbon in plants and soils while raising water tables, creating healthy streams and rivers that can once more flow to the seas, and providing access to water in dry land regions where it is very much needed and at the same time vastly increasing agricultural productivity and resilience to "natural" disasters.
- Increased focus and funding should be placed on global efforts to restore degraded natural environments, invest in water retention landscapes, adopt restorative and regenerative agricultural practices and reforest the earth.
- These and myriad other diverse best practices to reach all SDGs should be taught at schools and propagated via the Internet and the collaborative/sharing/partnership economy.

As well as environmental degradation, *money* is often cited as a barrier to poverty eradication. There are a number of ways of generating the funds needed. Most are based on changing destructive ways of treating Nature and at the same time generating financing to alleviate poverty. Some are already widely used others are still to be implemented. They will be used further in the Report to show how such diverse mechanisms can be adjusted to target a variety of challenges.

Best practices to build an economy of inclusiveness and generate a basic income for all:

- *Pigouvian (or Pigovian) Taxes:* Taxes placed on a negative externality to correct for a market failure.
 - For example, a factory does not take into account the damage their emissions cause to the air, since there is no market for air pollution. By imposing a pigouvian tax a government can artificially create a cost for such activity, a cost equal to what the price would be had a market for such activity existed, or a cost so high that it deters the activity all together. Tax revenues are then returned to the local community in which the issue exists.
 - An alternative form of pigouvian tax would add that those perpetrating the harm can be required to restore the damage they have caused as well as pay the tax. Revenue from such taxes can be used to restore damage done the environment or society. If the taxes are high enough they could take the place of tax on income—at least until people are no longer tempted to do this harm. Income from pigouvian taxes could go to the Global

Fund for Sustainable Development and a basic income for all people.

- *A Global Fund for Sustainable Development, (also referred to as a Global Resource Fund):*
 - This Fund could be fed by a number of activities, such as Piouvian Taxes and from other fines for unsustainable activities, such as income derived by shifting tax from income to a small rental fee for the use of natural resources. The implementation of Fund operations would begin immediately upon adoption of its Charter.
 - Start-up funds to pay for free access to the Fund's market and credit transfer program are authorized by the Charter. Its funds would be applied to:
 - Compensation for communities who suffer from the exploitation of resources under their jurisdiction;
 - Restoration of the global commons;
 - A basic income for all people to be used for the implementation of article 26 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- *Commons Rent /LandValue Taxation:* A method of raising public revenue by means of an annual charge on the rental value of land.
 - This tax encourages valuation based on the value of the land itself rather than land improvements, thus strengthening the local economy and discouraging destructive land uses.
 - Funds generated could be used to provide a basic income for the areas where it operates.
 - See www.LandValueTax.org and also The Vancouver Action Plan—the 1976 founding document for UN HABITAT (UNCHS)
- *The Norwegian Government Pension Fund.*
 - The purpose of the Government Pension Fund is to facilitate government savings to finance rising public pension expenditures, and support long-term considerations in the spending of government petroleum revenues.
 - The strategy for the management of the Fund is designed based on the expected long-term effects of different investment choices, thus giving the fund the potential to greatly influence the corporate governance market in Europe.
- *Self-financing World Marshall Plan*
 - A way of creating and financing a supplementary income for all people worldwide, endorsed by Noble Prize winner Jan Tinbergen.
 - See *The Ideal Self Image* by Pieter Kooistra (available in English and Dutch), sponsored by the Dutch Government.
 - See *The Year 2000: Crossroad for Mankind* by Dr. Lisinka Ulatowska (available in English and Dutch), describing ways to finance a basic income for all women, men and children and a World Marshall Plan for the Earth.
- *Use of alternative local currencies, including the LETSsystem*
 - *The LETSsystem:* The best-known local alternative currency. Those participating make a list of goods and services they are interested in providing and how much these would cost

in the local currency. Each participant in the LETSystem has a list of goods and services available through the LETSystem. Members are then paid by check in the local currency. At regular intervals the checks are sent in to a central administrator who credits and debits participants' accounts accordingly.

- *Time Dollars*: This system is similar to the LETSystem in that a local exchange of goods and services is encouraged. Instead of setting prices for individual goods and services, participants exchange services in time increments. In this way an hour of massage would be equivalent to an hour of baby-sitting or an hour of psychotherapy.
- *Use of local currencies*: Variations of this system are particularly valuable to regenerate areas where the economy is flagging and to stimulate employment. This is being used in countless locations in both rich and poor nations around the world.
- *Products and services provided for free by Commons communities and networks*.
 - Commons are groups and networks of people who jointly manage one or more resource in such a way that all stakeholders benefit equitably. Many of the resources they provide are free.
 - Commons are meeting a wide range of their own and community needs from local to global levels, and contribute greatly to poverty alleviation. Many focus specifically on sustainable development and so also help to conserve Nature. They include: sustainable communities, education at all levels and in quite diverse fields. Wikipedia is an example of a commons.
 - *Local to regional commons*: groups dedicated to such activities as water preservation and management, and for long term legal protection; groups for managing fisheries, forests and irrigation.
 - *Entrepreneurial clusters*: include groups that repurpose and up-cycle waste into new products. Examples include artists' cooperatives tapping landfills for production energy needs or for materials for they can use for their art; Brazilian Recycling Co-ops where marginalized people who sort garbage can be empowered to organize through Participatory Sustainable Waste Management models for income opportunities.
 - *Business Cooperatives*: Owner operated businesses, attracting one billion members worldwide. Cooperatives tend to do well even in times of economic downturn, because the owners/workers all share in the profits.
- *Micro-financing institutions*:
 - *Grameen Fund, Bangladesh - Women's Fund*. This fund provides small loans to women. Once loans are repaid, subsequent projects are funded for the same borrowers.
 - *The Trickle Up project*. Similar to the Grameen Fund in that amounts of US\$100 are made available to people in developing countries who want to begin, say, a cottage industry. Once this is operational and the funds are repaid, the next initiative can be financed.

TARGETS;

1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day

1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

Both lack of money and environmental degradation are often cited as two major barriers to poverty eradication. However, there are a number of alternative ways of generating the funds that can lift people out of poverty, most of them based on a two-pronged approach that involves changing destructive ways of treating Nature and at the same time generating financing to alleviate poverty. Some are already widely used others are still to be implemented.

Above, on page 16 under “**Best practices to build an economy of inclusiveness and generate a basic income for all**” are some best practices that can be implemented in such a way to help achieve both financial relief *and* environmental remediation for all, including those currently living in poverty.

The actions listed above can not only provide much-needed financial relief for those in poverty, but can also facilitate an inner shift from a "mindset of poverty" to one of "abundance for all".

1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

Some countries that have social protection services to protect and empower people from birth to grave find these systems being eroded because those who are employed no longer wish to fund them, believing that some beneficiaries of such systems do not respond as intended. The unemployed or underemployed beneficiaries of financial assistance are often seen to use social assistance as a way to remain inactive or to engage in avocations that are not remunerated financially. This causes ill feelings among those who are working and reluctance to help fund those benefiting from the system.

This problem can be in part resolved taking the following steps to awaken the motivation of those not adequately employed and to rekindle faith in the system among those that fund it:

- Implement career assessment tools and activities to establish the personal qualities, talents and skills of those who are un- or under-employed;
- Provide financial assistance and training to develop relevant new skills;
- Provide them with community service activities or other related jobs to repay the community while they are developing their skills;
- For those without employable skills, allow them to collect some benefits while doing community service in areas connected to their preferred activities. Increasingly, people have avocations with which they are unable or disinclined to earn a living. Through limited benefits and community service they can indirectly contribute to the social/partnership/collaborative economy— already a huge contributor to nations' GNP.

Many countries lack the money and infrastructure to provide social services for their people.

Even when people work and perform useful tasks for their communities, they are unable to get ahead because the resources are either not available or not safeguarded when large calamities occur.

As governments prepare to implement their national sustainable development plans, the following steps can help nations without the necessary infrastructure plan ways to develop and implement social protection plans:

- Consult with those in the UN System and/or with other governments with similar challenges for innovative ideas to develop their national sustainable plans, including all of the infrastructure needed: roads, transport, social protection, and other.
- Make full use of experts from abroad who can perform tasks at a distance (such as medical professionals who can treat patients via Skype or other similar technology, even in emergency wards) while the country is preparing to fill these posts;
- Appeal to the diaspora, as done by the African Development Bank, by increasing interest rates to encourage these to invest in the region;
- Determine precisely which talents, skills and interests the un- or underemployed in their country have and match the vacancies with those available to do the best job, using the two-pronged approach mentioned above to help the un-or underemployed to gain the necessary skills and then find their ideal employment. The UN System and the sharing, collaborative, partnership economy can help if people are given access to the Internet.
- Publicize successes to motivate all to contribute to the emerging system.

1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including micro finance

When we consider access to wealth, it is important that we both free up resources and prepare both "donors" and "recipients" to ensure that the changes remain durable. It is thus important to:

- Commit to making better use of the resources we have by creating zero waste.
- Prepare those who have not held property or assets before for ownership so that they know how to use, honor, manage and grow their resources without harming other people or Nature.
- Use funding mechanisms that deal with the roots of poverty eradication.

Here Nature can point the way, for there is no waste and no exclusion in Nature. All elements are in constant interaction with the whole Earth System and all species contribute to the health of the ecosystems. This can also be the case with the human community if we follow Nature's example.

Possible actions to ensure equal access to economic resources, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including micro finance.

1. Safeguard Nature and then ensure that access, stewardship of the global commons is guaran-

teed equally to all people, rich and poor.

- *Provide Nature with constitutional rights* so that crimes against Nature can be prosecuted under universal jurisdiction by law courts in all nations to protect her from harm by human beings. Here Ecuador and Bolivia are leaders.
 - *Institute governance to protect Natural systems, using bioregions as the basis.* People's cultures and livelihoods are often formed through appreciation for and in interaction with the natural environment where they live. To increase support by people for their bioregion, each person inhabiting a bioregion can be kept abreast of the health of a bioregion via the media, much as we now have weather forecasts. For example, in the Netherlands the nation is divided into "water districts": each with its own administration wherein all inhabitants pay for the cost of maintaining the quality of water in their district; everyone also pays their fair share of the upkeep and usage. The poor and most marginalized can be included in local governance and thereby also conservation of their bioregion.
 - *Create an International Environmental Court.*
 - *Publicize the essential role of diverse plant and animal species to human survival.* This will increase appreciation of people for the role of all parts of society and Nature, including the poor. It will facilitate cooperation among people and the introduction of laws that empower the poor and help to ensure that all people's fundamental rights to resources are implemented.
2. Level the playing field between rich and poor.
- *Ensure all have access to both international agreements and guidelines* for living in harmony with Nature. See UN website: www.harmonywithnatureun.org
 - *Give the poor and the marginalized means to access the Internet*, and thus the global sharing/partnership economy, erasing the digital divide.
 - *Create and implement laws that ensure that the commons can be stewarded by all people* for the benefit of all people and Nature. This would give all people including the poor and the disenfranchised equal access to these resources; and provide them with access to enforcement mechanisms, so that they can make sure that the global commons is stewarded for the well being of all.
 - *Provide the poor and disenfranchised with equal rights to help steward and manage commons lands* by creating a land lease system in countries with significant amount of lands not yet in private ownership. This system can be based on "land value maps" rather than selling land into speculative and inequitable land markets, promoting a system of direct democracy whereby the people on these lands vote for their preferred use of the lease fees.
 - *Publicize the important and often indispensable roles played by diverse groups of people and nations, rich and poor, to their own societies, and/or globally through the innovations they introduce, their systems of social solidarity, and cultural enrichments.*

- Employ ways to shift from a culture based on the survival of the fittest to ones for society-wide mutual empowerment: Essay competitions in schools, art exhibits, solutions offered via the Internet to poverty alleviation. The various submissions to these competitions as well as the winners themselves can receive broad acclaim and wide media coverage. Where the concept of “success” is shifted from “the survival of the fittest” to “mobilization of mutual empowerment”, the joy associated with the latter will also significantly increase. In addition, the paradigm of mutual empowerment builds collaboration, increases gratitude and appreciation among people, and thereby people will derive fulfillment at many different levels: psychological, interpersonal, social, and financial from working toward these new ideals.
3. Implement the financing mechanisms mentioned on page 16 (See **Best practices to build an economy of inclusiveness and generate a basic income for all**) in such a way that these both help create a basic income for all people while protecting the environment.

1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters

Building resilience requires balance in give and take between people and between people and Nature: and the insight that in providing resources to empower others and build a more resilient environment, we are helping to create a safer, more resilient world for ourselves, future generations, all peoples and the whole of Nature.

Only when our fundamental way of seeing our relationship to one another and Nature has changed can we take effective measures to help those most in need.

Possible actions to support the most vulnerable, including youth, the elderly and people with disabilities:

1. Government awareness campaigns on potential natural disasters including those due to Climate Change. Governments are already taking actions by placing warning signs in Tsunami Danger areas. If these warnings are to be useful, they should go hand in hand with details on what to do if there is a Tsunami alert. And those measures must include how to aid the most vulnerable, including young people, the elderly and people with disabilities. Such measures must also be publicized so that all people in a community can respond usefully.
2. Such family members, etc. of the most vulnerable see their essential value as human beings from close by. They can communicate this most convincingly to others who might not have direct experience with them. They will be most invested to provide a safe and nurturing environment, ensure that there are escape routes and other protection for the most vulnerable where they live, that take their particular vulnerabilities into account. They can also advocate municipal, national and global reforms that can protect them when disaster hits. This will require work on the family and community level, as well as national legislation relating to social services.

3. Those with children, elderly people or people with disabilities in their home, must be given special help to ensure that such houses are well equipped with suitable escape routes and family members can aid in their escape.
4. The media, including the social media, should be used as a powerful source to help educate people at local and national levels and to encourage civil initiatives to help the most vulnerable.
5. All Nations must implement the Economic and Social Covenants. Here peer support can help Governments so that they can see how these can be implemented and paid for. Regular visioning sessions between people in government responsible for this can be extremely useful.
6. A basic income for all people would be a way of empowering people to help themselves. Here are some ways in which this can be paid for:
7. Address the related issues of Poverty and Pollution
 - Poverty and pollution are inextricably linked. Pollution contributes to the poverty cycle, and can make it more difficult for children and future generations to escape this cycle. Pollution causes life-long disability and early death.
 - Poor populations are the most vulnerable to exposures from hazardous substances due to factors such as where they live, the types of livelihoods in which they are engaged, their low level of education or awareness of toxics-related risks, their lack of or limited access to health care and their poor levels of nutrition. Poor health and nutrition, typically associated with poverty, can magnify the impacts of exposure to toxic pollution. For example, children with nutritional deficiencies in calcium and iron have higher blood lead levels than peers with sufficient amounts of those nutrients. (See Poisoned Poor report by GAHP http://www.gahp.net/new/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/GAHPPoisonedPoor_Report-Sept-2013.pdf)
 - Exposure occurs at home and at work, or in contaminated public spaces. The consequences can range from contracting diseases that may interfere with an individual's ability to retain employment to severe illnesses causing long-term disability. In urban settings, the poor often reside in areas close to landfills, incinerators, hazardous or other wastes dumping sites, or other industrial zones/polluting activities. The WHO estimates that 98% of adults and 99% of children affected by exposure to lead live in low- and middle-income countries.
 - The informal recovery of lead from car batteries and the open burning of lead-containing wastes are serious sources of environmental lead contamination in low-income countries.
 - Poor children are more likely to be affected by lead exposure, since they are more likely to be malnourished; a diet low in iron and calcium allows more lead to be absorbed by the body.

- Safety of people engaged in livelihood activities where chemical exposures are significant (e.g., e-waste recycling of domestically-generated waste, pesticide use in agriculture, small-scale and artisanal mining, lead acid battery recycling, chemicals manufacturing, tanneries, etc.) need to be ensured. Recognizing the economic significance of these activities for the poor, emphasis should be placed on finding ways to reduce or eliminate toxic exposures from these activities.

1. a Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions

The process of mobilization of resources is already happening at three levels, through:

1. *Person to person sharing*: via the fast-growing sharing/collaborative/partnership economy between people who are moved to share goods, services and expertise including with people in poorer circumstances.
2. *Organizational giving*: by civil society, including the private sector, especially cooperatives whose giving to the local communities where they are situated and global development assistance is a part of their cooperative identity; and
3. *International development assistance*: where for decades there has been a resistance to provide Official Development Assistance promised, a shift seems to be taking place as most recently the UK joined the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden and Denmark as having surpassed the 07% ODA target and the EU's pledged special support for the Small Island Developing States.

The process of “giving from the heart” is also at times abused, undermined or directly opposed when (as we saw in the introduction) when donors and/or recipients

- Act from a conflicted sense that it is "either us or them",
- Are subject to spiritual poverty and feel they never have enough;
- Fear reprisals for changing the balance of power; or do not believe change is possible.

So while taking action to overcome systemic changes as recommended in the Introduction, here are additional actions we can take:

Possible actions to mobilize resources:

- 1 . Require official donor organizations, whether civil or governmental, to publicize their year-end financial statements.
- 2 . Publicize widely any misappropriation of funds so that these are subject to world public opinion and those responsible for abuses can be brought to justice.
- 3 . Force those found guilty of corruption to truly mend their ways as follows:
 - Use legal action to force them to repay the funds they embezzled or came about illegally;
 - Publicize the details of their embezzlement in their personal and business environments.

- Mandate that they do community labour, living in the communities they have wronged instead of being locked up in white-collar prisons.
4. This will be a hard penalty for some and it will deter others from taking jobs in the donor community to enrich themselves.
 4. Encourage donor organizations to coordinate their efforts so that those collecting funds, gathering resources, providing professional assistance, or providing transportation can be encouraged to work together. This will streamline the giving of aid and save vast sums by cutting out redundancy.

I.b Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

In Nature, all aspects of the Earth System interact within ecosystems in a balanced process of give and take which enables all aspects to thrive together. Plants and animals go through phases of life which tend to move from the need for protection of the very young, to positions of power with the task of caring for those who are weaker; and finally old age where they often play supportive roles before making way for a new generation. Actions to take care of those who are weaker come naturally within these natural cycles.

Within Nature there is a mindset that is centered on both the well being of the individual and that of the group. Both aspects are necessary if the group is to remain strong enough to benefit both the individual members and the species itself.

Is it possible for human beings to recognize the benefits when individuals, families, communities, nations and the global community, including the poor and both genders are able to fulfill their potential?

Examples exist where this is common practice:

- Among indigenous peoples individuals are born into specific roles within their communities; or undertake a vision quest as they become adults to establish how to allow their talents to blossom with full community support.
- In schools and universities that promote student-centred education, some, like the Waldorf and Rudolf Steiner Schools, which are based on the principles of Nature.
- In the sharing/collaborative/partnership economy, which is burgeoning on the Internet.
- In cooperative businesses based on caring, sharing and a sense of community. These are spontaneous expressions of human activity, often applying Nature's principles and thus in harmony with Nature.

Such examples are inclusive and so it is not necessary to implement gender sensitive or pro-poor legislation.

This is not necessarily so in the rest of society. Here, to create sound policy frameworks to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication, actions must both transform the mindset

whereby people compete for domination while at the same time bringing about a shift in legislation that is gender sensitive and pro-poor.

Actions to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication:

- *Combine pro-poor and gender-sensitive legislation with wide educational campaigns.* These could embrace education at all levels and in all fields, media reports and stories that speak to the heart. They should foster the interest in the deep inner sense of fulfillment to alleviate spiritual poverty, while at the same time developing a social consciousness and the interest in coupling individual fulfillment with the well being of society.
- Create campaigns that focus on ways to ease social and economic tensions as formerly estranged groups get to know and respect one another; and thereby counter the negative effects of what seems hopeless misery.
- Include content to speak to the important role that all genders, ages, all abilities and disabilities play in society. Each educational segment can focus on one particular group. The overriding message will be one of tolerance, compassion, value of each individual, and the benefits of interaction among people with different perspectives and life experiences.
- Show the benefits of poverty alleviation to the whole of society, including increased creativity and “thinking outside of the box”; that comes about with a more diverse workforce;
- Promote best practices that build goodwill between diverse social groups resulting from the indispensable contributions that are already being made through full economic and social integration of women and the formerly poor people; and eventually
- Allow hope to flourish that will ease hardened interpersonal, social and economic relationships, and transform social and economic unrest. Help people recognize that crime, conflicts, sabotage, and even terrorist acts are dead ends. Such first steps have been taken in countries like South Africa, Rwanda and Columbia. We are beginners at this process but we must attempt to learn.