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Road Blocks in Sustainable Development and Social Change:

A Buddhist Critique of Modern Capitalism and Globalization

Prof. K.T.S. Sarao (*)

This term *sustainable development* gained wide currency after it was used in the 1987 report of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, popularly known as *The Brundtland Report*. It was in this report that the need for the integration of economic development, natural resources management and protection, social equity and inclusion was introduced for the first time. Sustainable development as defined in *The Brundtland Report* is the most often-used definition: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development: Chapter 2). As a follow-up to the *Rio+20* (*Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*) and its outcome document called *The Future We Want*, *Agenda 21*, and the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (*JPOI*), the *United Nations Economic and Social Council* (*ECOSOC*) has undertaken to play a key role in mobilizing, facilitating, and partnering within the UN system to ensure that its expertise, programmes, and resources support global, regional,

(*) Department of Buddhist Studies, Delhi University, India

and national strategies to address the building blocks of sustainable development. If one were to take into consideration the concerns shown by the ECOSOC, it may be said that the present-day human society is headed towards a doomsday primarily because it has undertaken, what in Buddhism is called a wrong path (*agatigamana*) to development. Such an apprehension is well expressed in the influential book *Limits to Growth* published in 1972. This book examined five variables (world population, industrialization, pollution, food production, and resource depletion) on the computer modelling of exponential economic and population growth with finite resource supplies. The findings were that even if new resources are discovered over a period of time and the current reserves therefore change, still resources are finite and will eventually be exhausted. The book predicts that changes in industrial production, food production, and pollution are all in line with the economic and societal collapse that will take place within the twenty-first century itself (see Meadows and Meadows 2004; Hecht 2008). What exactly is this crisis that is staring humankind in the face? Who and what is responsible for this? How can this be avoided? What is Buddhist perspective on this crisis? An attempt is made in this paper to look for the probable answers to these questions.

Modern capitalism in which moral sentiments are viewed as irrelevant is overwhelmingly controlled and run by consumerism and salespersons. In such a system the avowed goal of financial organizations is to make money for themselves, what economists call *profit maximization* but which invariably degenerates into *expropriation of wealth*. However, as pointed out by Amartya Sen, "a departure from profit maximization need not necessarily be benign, nor need moral sentiments be invariably noble. Some of the worst barbarities in the contemporary world have been committed by self-sacrificing racists– ready to do harm to some people even at great cost or risk to themselves. Indeed, this process continues today with relentless persistence... The rejection of a self-centered life can go with the attempted advancement– sometimes violent promotion– of the perceived interests only of a particular group or community (excluding others), and even with wilfully inflicting damages on another group or community" (1997: 6). Production and distribution of goods is monopolized by organizations of enormous size which through the use

of clever means create an insatiable craving among the masses to possess more and more. Advertisements and psychological pressure in various forms are employed to intensify the craving for maximum consumption, and high-consumption lifestyles are aggressively promoted. One is lured into buying as much as possible irrespective of the fact whether one needs them or whether one has saved enough to pay for them. Thus, things are bought not because people need them but because they want them. In fact, a consumer society is characterized by the belief that owning things is the primary means to happiness and thus, consumption is accepted "as a way to self-development, self-realization, and self-fulfillment" (Benton 1997: 3). In fact, consumerism has become so ingrained in modern life that scholars such as David Loy (1997: 283) view it as a new world religion whose power lies in its extremely effective conversion techniques. This religion, Loy points out, works on the principle that not only growth and enhanced world trade will be beneficial to all, but growth will also not be constrained by the inherent limits of a finite planet. It basic flaw is that it depletes rather than builds "moral capital" (Loy 1997: 283). As pointed out by Erich Fromm, the profit-oriented economic system is no longer determined by the question: What is good for Man? But by the question: What is good for the growth of the system? Moreover, consuming has ambiguous qualities: It relieves anxiety, because what one has cannot be taken away; but it also requires one to consume ever more, because previous consumption soon loses its satisfactory character. Actually, this globalizing profit-oriented system works on the principle that egotism, selfishness, and greed are fundamental prerequisites for the functioning of the system and that they will ultimately lead to harmony and peace. However, egotism, selfishness, and greed are neither innate in human nature nor are they fostered by it. They are rather the products of social circumstances. Moreover, greed and peace preclude each other (Fromm 2008: 5-8, 23). From Buddhist point of view, more production of material goods, their increased consumption, and craving (*taṇhā*) for them does not necessarily lead to increase in happiness. Buddhism teaches that in order to arrive at the highest stage of human development, one must not crave possessions. Moreover, the impact of consumerism on the psyche and spirit of the consumer runs counter to environmental sustainability–

particularly because of the vital loss of the awareness of the world that exists outside the domain of consumer goods.

As pointed by Fritjof Capra, "Our obsession with economic growth and the value system underlying it have created a physical and mental environment in which life has become extremely unhealthy. Perhaps the most tragic aspect of this social dilemma is the fact that the health hazards created by the economic system are caused not only by the production process but by the consumption of many of the goods that are produced and heavily advertised to sustain economic expansion" (1983: 248). Similarly, Erich Schumacher, the author of *Small is Beautiful*, has warned that an attitude to life which seeks fulfilment in the single-minded pursuit of wealth i.e., materialism does not fit into this world, because it contains within itself no limiting principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. Such an attitude, he points out, carries within itself the seeds of destruction. Materialistic attitude is an ethical, spiritual, and metaphysical monstrosity which "means conducting the economic affairs of man as if people really did not matter at all. An entirely new system of thought based on attention to people instead of good is needed. It could be summed up in the phrase, "production by the masses, rather than mass production" (Schumacher 1973: 17-18, 56, 119). The upshot of this is that we need to seriously examine not only our attitudes and lifestyles but also our policies that govern the use of renewable and non-renewable resources, science and technology, and the scale and direction of industrialization.

Apart from the fact that developed nations, mostly through multinational companies and global financial and regulatory organizations, continue to exploit the developing nations, one major flaw of the current globalizing consumer system is that it promotes competition rather than cooperation. Competitive and adversarial attitude or the continuous feeling that one has to work against something not only generates conflict and resentment but also invariably results in unhealthy side effects. As Bertrand Russell once pointed out, "The only thing that will redeem mankind is co-operation, and the first step towards co-operation lies in the hearts of individuals" (1954: 204). It has been seen that individuals with cooperative skills are more creative and psychologically better adjusted. At the international

level, mutual antagonisms among nations have resulted not only in billions of dollars being wasted each year in the production of armaments but also a major chunk of the scientific manpower and technology has been directed at the war industry. Sadly, not only that economists look with some apprehension to the time when we stop producing armaments, but also "the idea that the state should produce houses and other useful and needed things instead of weapons, easily provokes accusations of endangering freedom and individual initiative" (Fromm 1955: 5).

As indicated above, the modern capitalism and accompanying globalization generates greed and selfishness whereby personal success is valued more highly than social responsibility. Political leaders and business executives often take self-serving decisions. Moreover, "the general public is also so selfishly concerned with their private affairs that they pay little attention to all that transcends the personal realm…. Necessarily, those who are stronger, cleverer, or more favored by other circumstances… try to take advantage of those who are less powerful, either by force and violence or by suggestion... (Conflict in the society) cannot disappear as long as greed dominates the human heart" (Fromm 2008: 10-11, 114). A society driven by greed loses the power of seeing things in their wholesomeness and we do not know when enough is enough. "The hope... that by the single-minded pursuit of wealth, without bothering our heads about spiritual and moral questions, we could establish peace on earth, is an unrealistic, unscientific, and irrational hope... the foundations of peace cannot be laid by... making inordinately large demands on limited world resources and... (putting rich people) on an unavoidable collision course– not primarily with the poor (who are weak and defenceless) but with other rich people" (Schumacher 1973: 18-19). In this regard, it may be said that Buddhism looks at greed (*lobha*: Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iv.96) and egotism (*avaññattikāma*: Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: ii.240; iv.1. *asmimāna*: Oldenberg 1879-1883: i.3; Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.273; Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.139, 425; Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iii.85) as leading to suffering. It may be pointed out that Buddhism does not mind wealth and prosperity as long as they are acquired and used in accord with the ethical norms. Real problem lies in the human tendency *to have* which the

Buddha called craving (*taṇhā*). In the present economic system, points out Schumacher, anything that is not *economic* is sought to be obliterated out of existence (1973: 27). In Buddhist view of things, profitability alone cannot be an adequate measure of whether something is *economic* or not. From Buddhist perspective, apart from taking into account the profitability of a given activity, its effect upon people and environment, including the resource base, is equally important.

Another flaw of the current globalizing consumer system is that it is widening the division between the rich and the poor. According to the UN Human Development Report of 1992, whereas the top billion people hold 83 percent of the world's wealth, the bottom billion have only 1.4 percent (see Elgin 1993: 42). It will be unrealistic to expect spiritual, psychological, and social harmony in the world while it remains materially divided. As a member of a common human family, each individual must have access to a reasonable share of the resources of the world so that s/he is able to fulfil his/her basic needs to realize his/her potential as a productive and respected member of the global family. This means that there is an urgent need for equitable access to resources not only between nations, but also between humans irrespective of gender and nationality. As desperate poverty of the poor has been responsible to some extent for the overuse of the limited resources, economic justice and social equity are important. However, affluent societies are the real problem children of today's world. For instance, it has been estimated that the birth of an American baby represents more than fifty times as great a threat to the environment as the birth of an Indian baby (Jones 1993: 14). Well-documented research has shown that world hunger caused by scarcity of food is a myth because the amount of food produced in the world at present is sufficient to provide about eight billion people with an adequate diet. The main culprit is the agribusiness in a world marred by inequalities (see Capra 1983: 257-258). "Without a revolution in fairness, the world will find itself in chronic conflict over dwindling resources, and this in turn will make it impossible to achieve the level of cooperation necessary to solve problems such as pollution and overpopulation" (Elgin 1993: 42). In this regard, it may be said that Buddhism promotes a wide distribution of basic necessities so that no one has to suffer deprivation, as deprivation is the root cause of

social conflict. Thus, talking about the cause of social conflict, the Buddha pointed out that, "goods not being bestowed on the destitute poverty grew rife; from poverty growing rife stealing increased, from the spread of stealing violence grew apace, from the growth of violence, the destruction of life became common" (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.67). From a Buddhist perspective, an ideal society would follow the motto of happiness and welfare of maximum number of people (*bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya*: Oldenberg 1879-1883: i.21). In such a society one would not look for one's own satisfaction in ways that may become a source of pain/suffering (*aghabhūta*) for others (Feer 1884-1898: iii.189) Hoarding wealth in any form is looked down upon in Buddhism (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iii.222) and if a wealthy person were to enjoy his wealth all by himself only, it would be a source of failure for him (Fausböll 1985: 102). In fact, someone working for the sake of wealth (*dhanahetu*, Fausböll 1985: 122), craving wealth (*dhanatthiko*, Fausböll 1985: 987; *bhogataṇhā,* Sarao 2009: 355), or taking pride in wealth i.e., displaying economic snobbery (*dhanatthaddho,* Fausböll 1985: 104) is considered as a fallen human being and an ignoramus who hurts himself as well as the others. Thus, in Buddhist approach to social and economic development, the primary criterion governing policy formulation must be the well-being of members of the society as a whole i.e., production should oriented towards serving the real needs of the people and not the other way round.

The present system believes that fulfilment of the material needs of humankind will lead to peace and happiness. But this is a mistaken view. As Fromm points out, an animal is content if its physiological needs– hunger, thirst and sexual needs– are satisfied because being rooted in the inner chemistry of the body, they can become overwhelming if not satisfied. Inasmuch as man is also animal, these needs must be satisfied. But inasmuch as one is human, the satisfaction of these instinctual needs is not sufficient to make one happy because human happiness depends on the satisfaction of those needs and passions which are specifically human. These essential needs which modern civilization fails to satisfy are "the need for relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, the need for a sense of identity and the need for a frame of orientation and devotion" (Fromm 1955: 25, 28, 65, 67, 134). From the Buddhist point of view, economic

and moral issues cannot be separated from each other because the mere satisfaction of economic needs without spiritual development can never lead to contentedness among people.

By pointing out that the vulgar chase of luxury and abundance is the root-cause of suffering, Buddhism encourages restraint, simplicity, and contentment. This way of life embraces frugality of consumption, a strong sense of environmental urgency, a desire to return to human-sized living and working environments, and an intention to realize our higher human potential– both psychological and spiritual (Elgin and Mitchell 1970: 5). This type of enlightened simplicity would integrate "both inner and outer aspects of life into an organic and purposeful whole…. outwardly more simple and inwardly more rich" (Elgin, 1993: 25). Enlightened simplicity is essential to attain sustainable development and to solve global problems of environmental pollution, resource scarcity, socioeconomic inequities, and existential/spiritual problems of alienation, anxiety, and lack of meaningful lifestyles. Thus, the need of the hour for the developed nations is to follow what Arnold Toynbee called *Law of Progressive Simplification* i.e., by progressively simplifying the material side of their lives and enriching the nonmaterial side (1947: 198). From Buddhist point of view, enlightened simplicity requires having contentment (*saṃtuṭṭhi:* Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: i.71; Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.13; Fausböll 1985: 265; Sarao 2009: 204; Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: ii.27, 31, ii.219) with little, and avoiding wastefulness i.e., having fewness of desires (*appicchatā:* Oldenberg 1879-1883: iii.21; Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.115; Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.13; Feer 1884-1898: ii.202). Contentment, which is viewed in Buddhism as the best wealth (*saṃtuṭṭhiparamaṃ dhanaṃ,* Sarao 2009: 204), is the mental condition of a person who is satisfied with what he has or the position in which he finds himself (*saṃtussamāno itarītarena*: Fausböll 1985: 42).

As pointed out by Karl Marx, "Private property has made us so stupid and partial that an object is only ours when we have it, when it exists for us as capital… Thus all the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by… the sense of having" (Bottomore, 1963: 159).

Thus, people acquire things, including useless possessions, because they "confer status on the owner" (Fromm 1955: 133). As pointed out by Fromm, in the *Having Mode of Existence* relationship to the world is one of possessing and owning, to treat everybody and everything as property. The fundamental elements in the relation between individuals in this mode of existence are competition, antagonism, and fear. In such a mode, one's happiness lies in one's superiority over others, in one's power and capacity to conquer, rob, and kill. The need to have is also propelled by the biologically given desire to live. Whether we are happy or unhappy, our body impels us to strive for immortality. But since we know by experience that we shall die, we seek for solutions that make us believe that, in spite of the empirical evidence, we are immortal. The peril of the having mode is that even if a state of absolute abundance could be reached; those who have less in physical health and in attractiveness, in gifts, in talents bitterly envy those who have *more* (Fromm 2008: 66-67, 91-92). In the *Being Mode of Existence* one's happiness lies in aliveness and authentic relatedness to the world, loving, sharing, sacrificing, and giving. The difference between these two modes of existence is that whereas the *having* mode is centered around persons, the *being* mode is centered around things (Fromm 2008: 15, 21, 66).

There is an urgent need to sensitize people to the fact of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all living beings, including humans, and resources. The earth is not only teeming with life but seems to be a living being in its own right. As pointed out by Capra, all the living matter on earth, together with the atmosphere, oceans, and soil, forms a complex system that has all the characteristic patterns of self-organization. The earth is a living system and it functions not just like an organism but actually seems to be an organism– Gaia, a living planetary being" (Capra 1983: 284-285). However, as pointed out by Carolyn Merchant, "As long as the earth was considered to be alive and sensitive, it could be considered a breach of human ethical behavior to carry out destructive acts against it" (Merchant 1980: 3). But with the disappearance of cultural constraints, the globalizing consumer in the name of advancement of knowledge, economic growth, or technological progress has become uncaringly abusive towards earth. A wide-ranging,

objective, well-documented, and value free scientific research shows that each living creature has its place in the biosphere whereby it plays its unique role as part of the collective balance. From a Buddhist perspective, not only that life is inherently valuable but human and other forms of life are also interdependent and reciprocal. Thus, nature and humanity on the one hand and humans amongst themselves on the other are seen as mutually obligated to each other. A living entity can neither isolate itself from this causal nexus nor have an essence of its own. In other words, as part of the Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*), humans are seen as affecting their environment not only through the purely physical aspects of their actions, but also through the moral and immoral qualities of such actions. It is thus said that, if a king and his people act unrighteously, this has a bad effect on the environment and its gods, leading to little rain, poor crops and weak, short-lived people (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: ii.74-76). This message is also strongly implied by the *Aggañña Suttanta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.80-98) which shows how in the beginning nature was bountiful but it became less so when humans began to take greedily from it. When they began to harvest more rice than they needed, it was not naturally able to grow quickly enough. This necessitated cultivation, which in turn caused division of land into private fields, so that property was invented. Origin of private property became the root cause of different social and economic ills. Thus, one is not surprised that from Buddhist point of view, consumer-oriented modernity "is rejected because it is seen as a form of life that has in a short period of time despoiled the landscape and done irreparable damage to the environment" (Lancaster 2002: 1-2).

Just as poverty is the cause of much crime, wealth too is responsible for various human ills. Buddhism views material wealth as being required only for meeting the bare necessities and must only be earned through are righteous and moral means. Generosity (*dāna*) and liberality (*cāga*) are always linked in Buddhism with virtue (Sarao 2009: 177). Moreover, by giving one gets rid of greediness/selfishness (*macchariya*) and becomes more unacceptable to others because "one who gives makes many friends" (Fausböll 1985: 187; Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iii.273. v.40,

209; Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: iii.234). Generosity is one of the important qualities that make one a gentleman (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iv.218). The Buddha compares the person who earns wealth righteously and shares it with the needy to a person who has both eyes, whereas the one who only earns wealth but does no merit is like a one-eyed person (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: i.129-130). In other words, if a healthy society is to be built, liberality and generosity must be fostered as its foundation pillars.

Avoidance of wastage is an important aspect of Buddhist enlightened simplicity. The fig-tree glutton (*udumbarakhādika*) method blamed by the Buddha (Feer 1884-1898: iv.283), the method of shaking down an indiscriminate amount of fruit from a fig-tree in order to eat a few, is exactly the same as the one employed in drift-net fishing, where many more aquatic life is destroyed than utilized. Humanity cannot continue to consume the planet's limited resources at the rate to which it has become accustomed. Through unbridled expansion, the economy is not only absorbing into itself more and more of the resource base of the extremely fragile and finite ecosystem but is also burdening the ecosystem with its waste. As human population grows further; the stress on the environment is bound to rise to even more perilous levels. In 1930 the world population was two billion people, in 1975 and 2000 it went up to four billion and six billion respectively. It will most probably cross ten billion by 2025! Exploding population levels wipe out what little is accomplished in raising living standards. The basic solutions involve dramatic and rapid changes in human attitudes, especially those relating to reproductive behavior, economic growth, technology, the environment, and conflict resolution. There "is enough food to feed everyone an adequate diet if food were distributed according to need. But there is not the slightest sign that humanity is about to distribute anything according to need" (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 2009: 67). As suggested by Stephanie Kaza, the environmental impact is accelerated by the rapidly rising population numbers, increasingly efficient technologies, and consumption rates beyond the planet's capacity. If any one of these is reduced, the impact drops and if one or all three are increased, the impact rises, in some cases dramatically (2000: 23).

Since human beings are social creatures who naturally come together for common ends, this means that a social order guided by Buddhist principles would consist primarily of small-scale communities with localized economies in which each member can make an effective contribution. To attain sustainable development, what we need most of all is streamlining and downsizing. Only small-scale and simple technology would not drain natural resources as in it production would be aimed principally at local consumption, so that there is direct face-to-face contact between producers and consumers. As Schumacher says, large-scale technologies are dehumanizing and morally wrong as they become impersonal and unresponsive making individuals functionally futile, dispossessed, voiceless, powerless, excluded, and alienated. "Wisdom demands a new orientation of science and technology towards the organic, the gentle, the nonviolent, the elegant and beautiful" (Schumacher 1973: 20). From a Buddhist perspective, a new relation must be established between people and nature, one of cooperation not of exploitation or domination. The driving force of such an economy would be to make a distinction between a state of utmost misery (*daḷiddatā*) (Feer 1884-1898: v.100, 384, 404), being sufficient (*yāpanīya*) (Oldenberg, 1879-1883: i.59, 212, 253), and glut (*accogāḷha*) (Morris and Hardy 1995-1900: iv.282). There would be a balance between material excess and deprivation i.e., avoidance of both mindless materialism and needless poverty leading to a balanced approach to living that harmonizes both inner and outer development.

Implementation and realization of the spirit underlying the Buddhist Eight-fold Path (*aṭṭhaṅgika-magga*) encompassing wisdom (*paññā*), morality (*sīla*), and meditation (*samādhi*) in eight parts can truly offer a path leading to sustainable development. Right View (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) and Right Thought (*sammā-saṃkappa*) constitute wisdom; Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*), Right Conduct (*sammā-kammanta*), and Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*) constitute morality; and Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*), and Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) form the practice of meditation (Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: ii.311-315). By following this path of wisdom, morality, and meditation one can grow inwardly and follow a life of enlightened simplicity. By following this path humans can aim at harmonious living

(*dhammacariya, samacariya*) (Trenckner and Chalmers 1888-1896: i.289; Feer 1884-1898: i.101) and compassion (*karuṇā*) with "the desire to remove what is detrimental to others and their unhappiness" (Fausböll 1985: 73). This would form the basis of the weltanschauung of the well-adjusted and balanced person, who would seek inner peace (*ajjhattasanti,* Fausböll 1985: 837), and inward joy (*ajjhattarata,* Sarao 2009: 362; Rhys Davids and Carpenter 1890-1911: ii.107; Feer 1884-1898: v.263) by exercising a degree of restraint, limiting his/her needs, and avoiding being greedy (*ussuka*) (Sarao 2009: 199) because one can never become worthy of respect if one is envious, selfish, and fraudulent (*issukī maccharī saṭho*) (Sarao 2009: 262).

The upshot of the above stated is that the essence of a happy society lies not in the multiplication of wants but in downsizing. It is unbuddhistic to consider goods as more important than people and consumption as more important than creative activity. Such an aim was made explicit in the Green Buddhist Declaration, prepared by members of the international Buddhist community for discussion at the World Fellowship of Buddhism in Colombo (1980): "We believe that since world resources and the ecosystem cannot support all peoples at the level of the consumption of the advantaged nations, efforts towards global equity must be coupled with efforts towards voluntary simplicity, in one's individual life-style and through democratically-determined policies. The economic structures which encourage consumerist greed and alienation must be transformed." Unless we make a dramatic shift in our overall pattern of thinking and living, we will soon produce a world of monumental misery and destruction. As suggested by Alan Durning, the linked fates of humanity and the natural realm depend on us, the consumers. We can curtail our use of ecologically destructive things and cultivate the deeper, non-material sources of fulfillment that bring happiness: family and social relationships, meaningful work, and leisure (Durning 1992). For building a sustainable future affluent members of the society will need to make dramatic changes in the overall levels and patterns of consumption. We must choose levels and patterns of consumption that are globally sustainable, i.e., use the world's resources wisely and do not overstress the world's ecology, i.e., consuming in ways that respect the rest of life on

this planet. It is time that each of us chooses a way of life that is materially simple, inner directed, and ecology friendly. The fundamental issue is of the Earth's finite capacity to sustain human civilization. "Lifeboat ethic" must be replaced by "spaceship earth ethic." Finally, it may be befitting to conclude in the words of Elgin:

"To live sustainably, we must live efficiently– not misdirecting or squandering the earth's precious resources. To live efficiently, we must live peacefully, for military expenditure represents an enormous diversion of resources from meeting basic human needs. To live peacefully, we must live with a reasonable degree of equity, or fairness, for it is unrealistic to think that, in a communications-rich world, a billion or more persons will accept living in absolute poverty while another billion live in conspicuous excess. Only with greater fairness in the consumption of the world's resources can we live peacefully, and thereby live sustainably, as a human family" (Elgin, 1993: 41-42).

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