

Ecological and Economic Principles for a New World Order

Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.

International Environment Forum (IEF)

<http://iefworld.org>

and

ebbf

<http://www.ebbf.org>

September 2013

The Goal of SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”

World Commission on Environment and Development 1987

To achieve sustainability, we must...

- redefine our goal and purpose
- integrate our view of the human and planetary systems
- understand the evolutionary processes pushing globalization, including population growth and scientific and technological development
- identify the major driving forces behind unsustainable trends
- define and implement the economic, social and environmental responses necessary to put us on sustainable trajectories

DATA SOURCE: CETIOM 1991. La Culture du Soja. Centre Technique des Oléagineux Métropolitains, Paris.

DATE: 21 September 1993

INPUTS (data per tonne of of main product)

OUTPUTS (data per tonne of main product)

RAW MATERIALS

Extracted from the environment

soy bean seeds

30

Bought in

fertilizer
nitrogen

99

phosphates

28

potash

56

calcium oxide

21

magnesium oxide

17

insecticides
herbicides

1.65

ENERGY

diesel fuel

1.65

TRANSPORT SERVICES

OTHER INPUTS

.../tonne

MAIN PRODUCTS

soybean meal

BY-PRODUCTS

residue of the plant used as fertilizer

kg/tonne

SOLID WASTE TO BE PROCESSED

kg/tonne

FLUO-ORGANIC WASTE TO BE PROCESSED

kg/tonne

ENVIRONMENTAL OUTPUTS

kg/tonne

PHYSICAL STATE

CO₂

45.3

CO

0.01

hydrocarbons

0.0046

NO_x

0.071

SO₂

0.32

particles

0.015

EMISSIONS TO WATER

nitrogen

99

phosphorus

28

potassium oxide

56

calcium oxide

21

magnesium oxide

17

insecticides

12

herbicides

1.65

note: a worst case assumption is made that all fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides go to water as emissions

EMISSIONS TO LAND

Present unsustainability

- Population will grow to 9 billion by 2050
- 20% of population uses 80% of resources
- Energy challenge / climate change threats
- Growing water shortages
- Loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services
- Food production capacity at risk
- Extremes of wealth and poverty widening
- Financial system has imploded

Globalization



- is the logical next step in human evolution, but
- Economic globalization is driven by powerful governments and multinational businesses for their own benefit
- Social globalization is being strongly resisted
- Globalization of environmental problems threatens future sustainability
- Globalization of information makes us aware

20th century consumer society rooted in materialism

- The early twentieth century materialistic interpretation of reality has become the dominant world faith in the direction of society
- Dogmatic materialism has captured all significant centres of power and information at the global level, ensuring that no competing voices can challenge projects of world wide economic exploitation

The attractions of consumer culture

- Materialism's vision of human progress produced today's consumer culture with its ephemeral goals
- For the small minority of people who can afford them, the benefits it offers are immediate
- The breakdown of traditional morality has led to the triumph of animal impulses and hedonism
- Selfishness has become a prized commercial resource; falsehood reinvents itself as public information; greed, lust, indolence, pride, violence are broadly accepted and have social and economic value
- Yet it fills a vacuum in the absence of any deeper meaning in life, and people take it for granted

Impacts of Materialism

Materialism, rooted in the West, has now spread to every corner of the planet, breeding, in the name of a strong global economy and human welfare, a culture of consumerism. It skilfully and ingeniously promotes a habit of consumption that seeks to satisfy the basest and most selfish desires, while encouraging the expenditure of wealth so as to prolong and exacerbate social conflict. One result is a deepening confusion on the part of young people everywhere, a sense of hopelessness in the ranks of those who would drive progress, and the emergence of a myriad social maladies.

Growth-debt Trap

- Economic growth today is largely fueled by consumer, corporate and government borrowing
- As long as the growth rate is higher than the interest rate, reimbursement is possible
- If growth slows or stops, defaulting is inevitable
- The consumer society was a necessary creation to maintain the economic growth/debt paradigm
- Growth in energy and resource consumption cannot continue much longer as we reach planetary boundaries of the Earth system

Fossil fuels and climate change

- The accepted limit for global warming without significant damage to the planet is 2°C, and this is probably too high
- The estimated remaining capacity of the atmosphere to absorb carbon without going past this limit is 565 gigatons of CO₂, which may be reached in 16 years
- Proven oil, coal and gas reserves total 2,795 gigatons (not counting unconventional sources)
- To prevent catastrophic climate change, 80% of proven reserves need to be taken off asset accounts and left in the ground

Arctic Methane

- Warming temperatures in the Arctic are releasing methane from permafrost and hydrates under the sea
- Plumes of gas a kilometer in diameter have been observed in the East Siberian Sea
- The release of 50 gigatonnes of methane over a decade will bring forward the date of a global 2°C increase by 15-35 years
- The resulting impacts from flooding, sea level rise, damage to agriculture and human health will cost \$60 trillion (the size of the global economy in 2012)

Our society is accumulating economic, social and environmental debt

- UK Chief Scientist (19 March 2009): the world faces a 'perfect storm' of problems in 2030 as food, energy and water shortages interact with climate change to produce public unrest, cross-border conflicts and mass migrations

THE PROBLEMS ARE GLOBAL BUT GOVERNANCE IS STILL NATIONAL

- Legislation: social definition of ethical limits
- Taxation: wealth redistribution for common services and social security
- International frameworks largely non-binding (labour, health, transport, intellectual property)
- No global mechanism for economic management (IMF, G8, G20, etc.)
- No mechanism for global wealth redistribution
- No international legislation providing common standards or a level playing field for business

Scenarios from World 3

(Meadows et al. (1992) Beyond the Limits)

SCENARIO 1

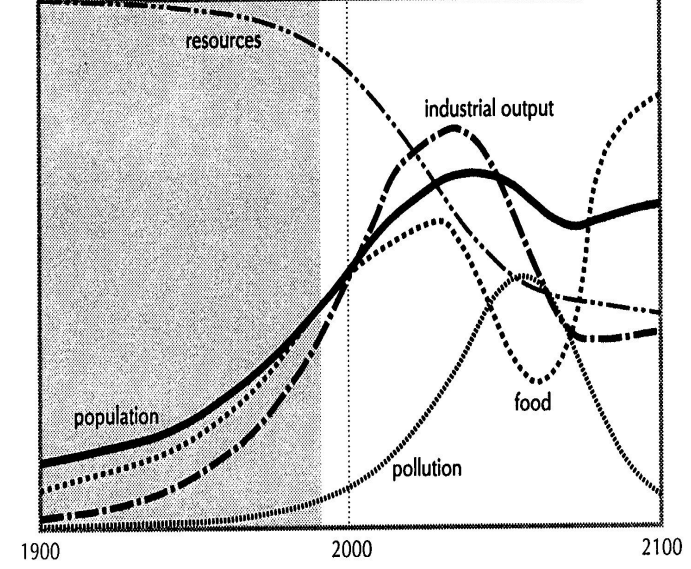
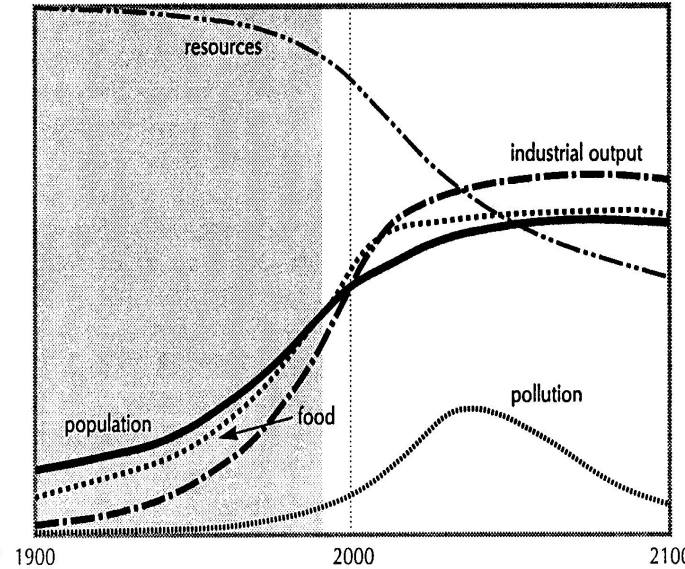
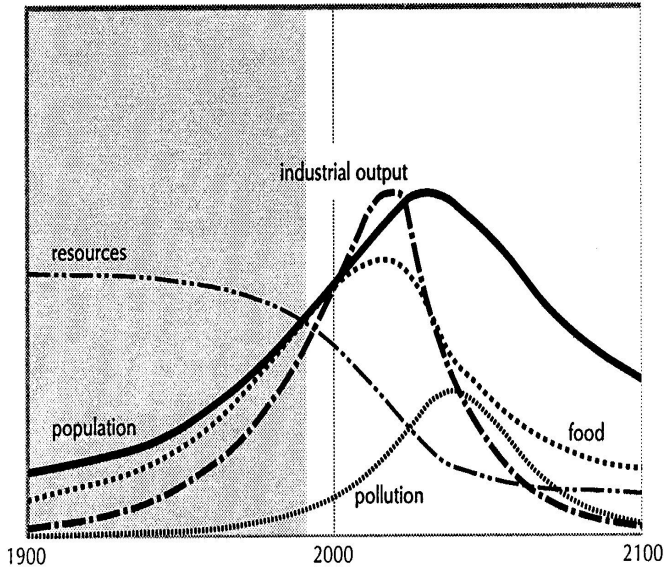
SCENARIO 10

SCENARIO 12

State of the world

State of the world

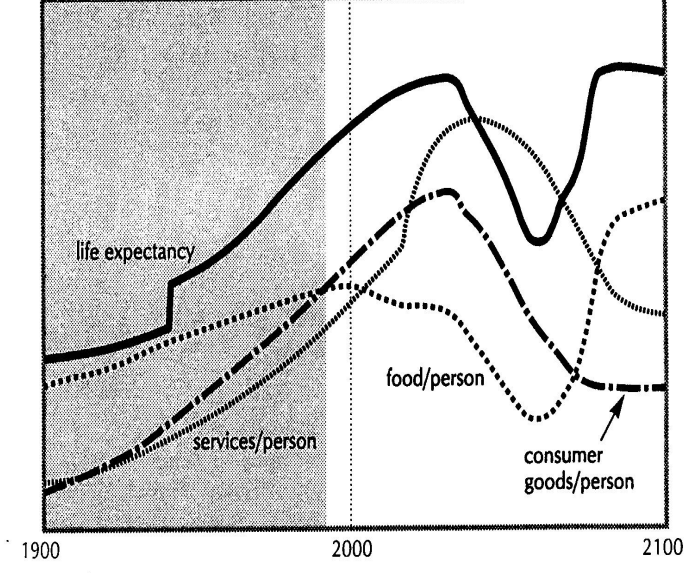
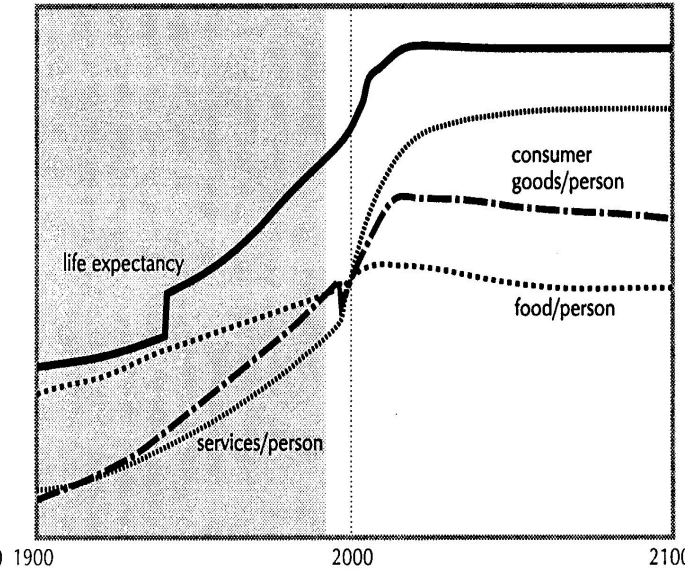
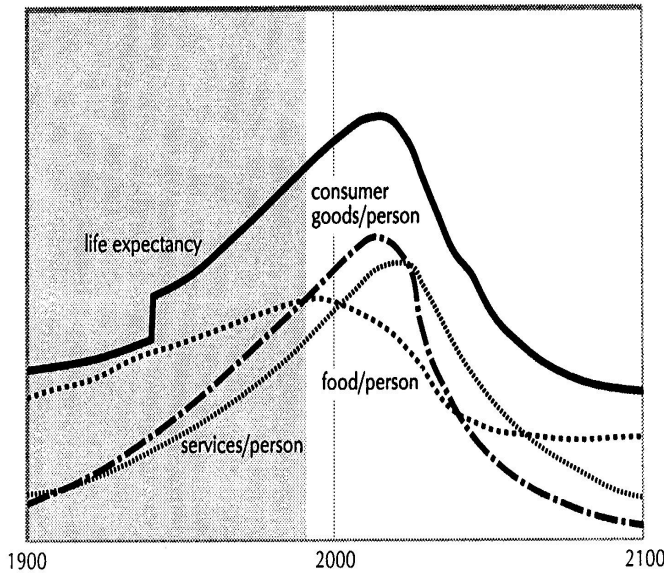
State of the world



Material standard of living

Material standard of living

Material standard of living



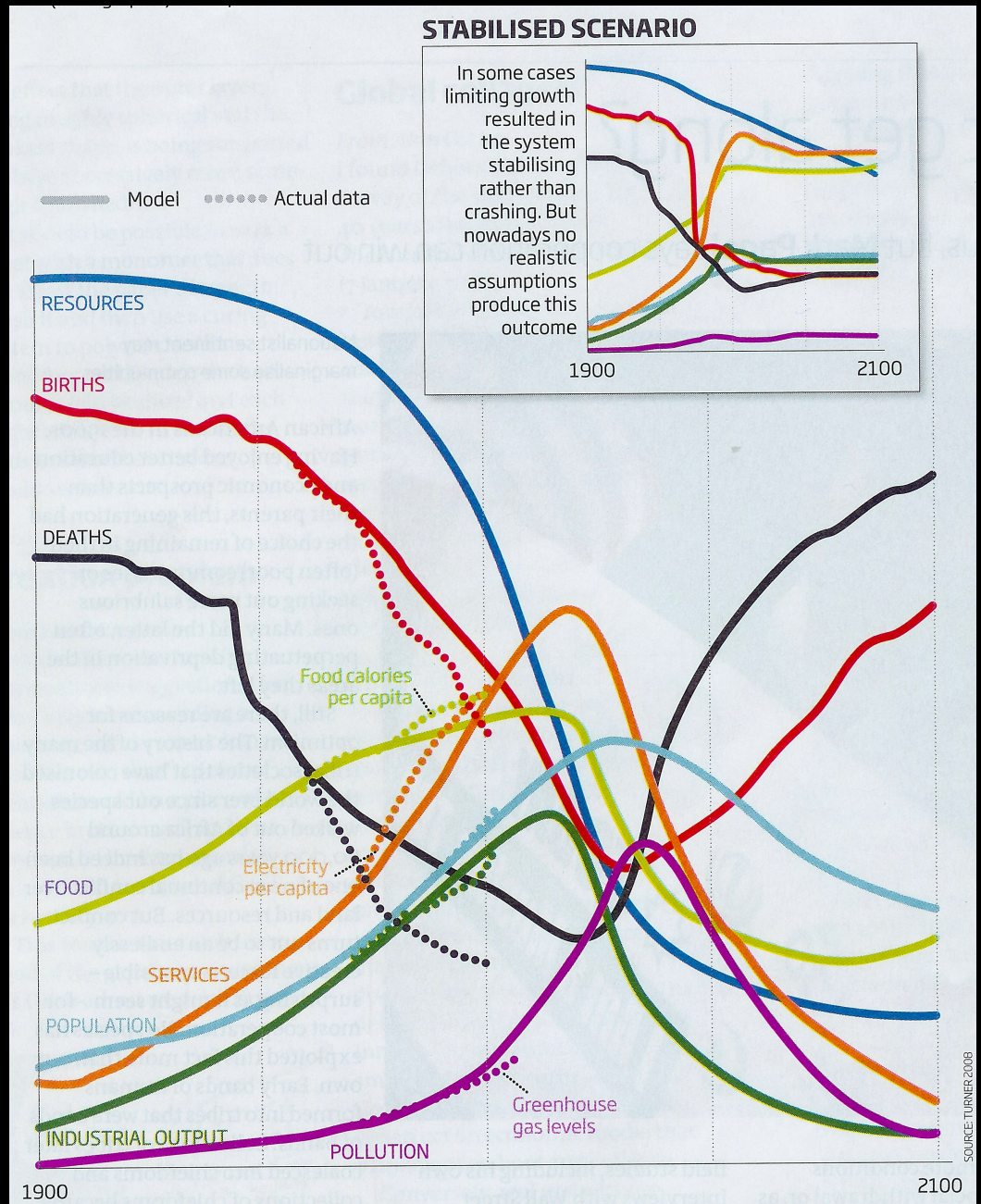
Business as usual

Transition 1995

Transition 2015

Where are we now?

MacKenzie, Debra. 2012 Domsday Book. *New Scientist*, 7 January 2012, pp. 38-41.



This will require moderation in Material Civilization

The civilization, so often vaunted by the learned exponents of arts and sciences, will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men.... The day is approaching when its flame will devour the cities...

Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892)

Historical cycles

Peter Turchin (mathematical ecologist) 2010:

- a civilization or empire depends on social cohesion (indicator: collective violence)
- population growth and new technology generate wealth for elite → oversupply of labour increases poverty → concentration of wealth → factionalism → anarchy → collapse → restart (200 year cycle)
- predicted political instability/impending crisis in Western Europe and US peaking 2020
- need to reduce social inequality

We need an alternative to the consumer society

- sufficiently attractive to overcome resistance and habit
- worth sacrificing the superficial for what is deeper and more fundamentally rewarding
- effort comparable to religious conversion
- combines individual transformation with social action

The importance of values

- Values: qualities on which worth, desirability, utility depend
- Principles or rules generated by an ethical or spiritual framework
- Values are what determine how humans relate to each other
- They are the social equivalent of DNA, encoding the information through which society is structured
- For society to evolve, its values must also progress

A higher human purpose

How... can we resolve the paralyzing contradiction that, on the one hand, we desire a world of peace and prosperity, while, on the other, much of economic and psychological theory depicts human beings as slaves to self-interest? The faculties needed to construct a more just and sustainable social order—moderation, justice, love, reason, sacrifice and service to the common good—have too often been dismissed as naïve ideals. Yet, it is these, and related qualities that must be harnessed to overcome the traits of ego, greed, apathy and violence, which are often rewarded by the market and political forces driving current patterns of unsustainable consumption and production.

The role of spiritual principle

There are **spiritual principles**, or what some call human values, by which solutions can be found for every social problem.... Leaders of governments and all in authority would be well served in their efforts to solve problems if they would first seek to identify the principles involved and then be guided by them.

(Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*)

Primacy of Oneness of Humanity

- Since humanity is one, each person is born into the world as a trust of the whole, and each bears a responsibility for the welfare of all humanity
- This collective trusteeship constitutes the moral foundation of human rights and environmental governance
- The welfare of each country and community can only be derived from the well-being of the whole planet

Sustainability requires a global response

Acceptance of the **oneness of mankind** is the first fundamental prerequisite for the reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind.

(Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, p. 13-14)

T

Ecological Principles

(Garden of Linnaeus)

Sustainability - an ethical concept

As trustees or stewards of the planet's resources and biodiversity, we must:

- ensure sustainability and equity of resource use into distant future
- consider the environmental consequences of development activities
- temper our actions with moderation and humility
- value nature in more than economic terms
- understand the natural world and its role in humanity's collective development both material and spiritual

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*. 1998)

Sustainability - fundamental responsibility

Sustainable environmental management must come to be seen not as a discretionary commitment mankind can weigh against other competing interests, but rather as a fundamental responsibility that must be shouldered, a pre-requisite for spiritual development as well as the individual's physical survival.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*. 1998)

The environment

We cannot segregate the human heart from the **environment** outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is **organic** with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.

(Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 17 February 1933,
Compilation on Social and Economic Development, p. 4)

Preservation of Nature

Bahá'í Scriptures describe nature as a reflection of the sacred. They teach that nature should be valued and respected, but not worshipped; rather, it should serve humanity's efforts to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. However, in light of the **interdependence of all parts of nature**, and the importance of evolution and diversity "to the beauty, efficiency and perfection of the whole," every effort should be made to **preserve as much as possible the earth's bio-diversity and natural order.**

Ecological systems

...the growth and development of the vegetable world is impossible without the existence of the animal kingdom, and the maintenance of animal life is inconceivable without the co-operation of the vegetable kingdom. Of like kind are the relationships that exist among all created things. Hence... co-operation and reciprocity are essential properties which are inherent in the **unified system** of the world of existence, and without which the entire creation would be reduced to nothingness.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in *Compilation on Huququ’llah*, p. 14-15; *Compilation on Social and Economic Development*, p. 12)

Love for animals

Briefly, it is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost **loving-kindness** to every living creature.... The feelings are one and the same, whether ye inflict pain on man or on beast.

Train your children from their earliest days to be infinitely tender and loving to **animals**. If an animal be sick, let the children try to heal it, if it be hungry, let them feed it, if thirsty, let them quench its thirst, if weary, let them see that it rests.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 158-159)

The countryside

The **country** is the world of the soul,
the city is the world of bodies.

(Bahá'u'lláh)





Economic Principles

Our economic system has failed to deal with sustainability

- Economic thinking is challenged by the environmental crisis (including climate change)
- **The belief that there is no limit to nature's capacity to fulfil any demand made on it is false**
- A culture which attaches absolute value to expansion, to acquisition, and to the satisfaction of people's wants must recognise that such goals are not, by themselves, realistic guides to policy
- Economic decision-making tools cannot deal with the fact that **most of the major challenges are global**

Justice and Equity

It is unjust to sacrifice the well-being of the generality of humankind -- and even of the planet itself -- to the advantages which technological breakthroughs can make available to privileged minorities.

Only development programmes that are perceived as meeting their needs and as being just and equitable in objective can hope to engage the commitment of the masses of humanity, upon whom implementation depends.

(adapted from Baha'i International Community,
Prosperity of Humankind)

Unity through Solidarity

- We should consider every human being a trust of the whole.
- The goal of wealth creation should be to make everyone wealthy.
- Voluntary giving is more meaningful and effective than forced redistribution.
- The distribution of the planet's resources should be equitably regulated.

Redefining Prosperity

Man's merit lieth in service and virtue and not in the pageantry of wealth and riches. Take heed that your words be purged from idle fancies and worldly desires and your deeds be cleansed from craftiness and suspicion.

Dissipate not the wealth of your precious lives in the pursuit of evil and corrupt affection, nor let your endeavours be spent in promoting your personal interest. Be generous in your days of plenty, and be patient in the hour of loss.... Guard against idleness and sloth, and cling unto that which profiteth mankind, whether young or old, whether high or low.

Obligation to Work

It is incumbent upon each one of you to engage in some **occupation** - such as a craft, a trade or the like. We have exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of **worship** of the one true God.... Waste not your hours in idleness and sloth, but occupy yourselves with what will profit you and others.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 33, p. 30)

Universal Employment

It is the duty of those who are in charge of the organization of society to give every individual the opportunity of acquiring the necessary talent in some kind of profession, and also the means of utilizing such a talent, both for its own sake and for the sake of earning the means of his livelihood....

(Kitáb-i-Aqdas, note 56 to para. 33, p. 192-193)

Spiritual Perspectives on Poverty and Wealth

Know ye in truth that **wealth** is a mighty barrier between the seeker and his desire, the lover and his beloved. The rich, but for a few, shall in no wise attain the court of His presence nor enter the city of content and resignation....

(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words* (Persian) 53)

What is a reasonable salary?

Overstep not the bounds of **moderation**, and deal justly with them that serve thee. Bestow upon them according to their **needs**, and not to the extent that will enable them to lay up riches for themselves, to deck their persons, to embellish their homes, to acquire the things that are of no benefit to them, and to be numbered with the extravagant. Deal with them with undeviating justice, so that none among them may either suffer want, or be pampered with luxuries. This is but manifest justice.

...

(Bahá'u'lláh [to the Sultan of Turkey], *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, CXIV, pp. 235-236)

Distribution of Wealth through Taxation

The fundamental basis of the community is **agriculture**, tillage of the soil. All must be producers. Each person in the community whose income is equal to his individual producing capacity shall be exempt from taxation. But if his income is greater than his needs he must pay a tax until an adjustment is effected.... if his necessities exceed his production he shall receive an amount sufficient to equalize or adjust. Therefore **taxation will be proportionate to capacity and production** and there will be no poor in the community.

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p. 37*)

Profit-sharing

...the owners of properties, mines and factories should **share their incomes** with their employees and give a fairly certain percentage of their products to their workingmen in order that the employees may receive, beside their wages, some of the general income of the factory so that the employee may strive with his soul in the work.

Voluntary Sharing

... the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh advocate voluntary sharing, and this is a greater thing than the equalization of wealth. For equalization must be imposed from without, while sharing is a matter of free choice.

Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him. And sharing is a personally chosen righteous act: that is, the rich should extend assistance to the poor, they should expend their substance for the poor, but of their own free will, and not because the poor have gained this end by force.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, 79, p. 115)

Voluntary simplicity

Take from this world only to the measure of your needs, and forego that which exceedeth them.

(Bahá'u'lláh)

The true purpose of economics

Economics has ignored humanity's broader social and spiritual needs, resulting in:

- Corrosive materialism among the wealthy
- Persistent poverty for masses of the world's peoples

Economic systems should give the peoples and institutions of the world the means to achieve the real purpose of development: the cultivation of the limitless potentialities in human consciousness.

(adapted from Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*, 1998)

Addressing Poverty

The technologies and resources exist to meet the basic needs of humanity and to eliminate **poverty**....

The economics of food production and distribution will have to be reoriented and the critical role of the farmer in food and economic security properly valued.

With regard to health – the physical, spiritual, mental and social well-being of the individual – access to clean water, shelter, and some form of cheap energy would go a long way toward eradicating the problems that currently plague vast numbers of individuals and communities.

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development, 1998)

A new economic model

- furthering a dynamic, just and thriving social order
- strongly altruistic and cooperative in nature
- providing meaningful employment
- helping to eradicate poverty in the world

A new standard for economic conduct

...eschew... dishonesty in one's transactions or the economic exploitation of others. There should be no contradiction between one's economic conduct and one's beliefs. By applying in one's life principles of fairness and equity, each person can uphold a standard far above the low threshold by which the world measures itself.

Social and Economic Justice

Social justice will be attained only when every member of society enjoys a relative degree of material prosperity and gives due regard to the acquisition of spiritual qualities. The solution, then, to prevailing economic difficulties is to be sought as much in the application of spiritual principles as in the implementation of scientific methods and approaches.

UHJ, 2 April 2010

Ends and Means

Vigilance must be exercised in distinguishing "means" from "ends".

The acquisition of wealth is acceptable and praiseworthy to the extent that it serves as a means for achieving higher ends:

- providing people with basic necessities
- fostering social progress
- promoting the welfare of society
- contributing to the establishment of a world civilization.

To make the accumulation of wealth the central purpose is unworthy.

Goals and improper means

Regrettably, a number of today's leaders-- political, social, and religious--as well as some of the directors of financial markets, executives of multinational corporations, chiefs of commerce and industry, and ordinary people who succumb to social pressure and ignore the call of their conscience, ...justify any means in order to achieve their goals.

Wealth and its uses

Wealth is praiseworthy in the highest degree, if it is acquired... in commerce, agriculture, crafts and industry, if the measures adopted... in generating wealth serve to enrich the generality of the people, and if the wealth thus obtained is expended for philanthropic purposes and the promotion of knowledge, for the establishment of schools and industry and the advancement of education, and in general for the welfare of society.

based on UHJ, 2 April 2010

Justice in the enterprise

...the acquisition of wealth should be governed by the requirements of justice.... An employer and employee, for example, are bound by the laws and conventions that regulate their work, and each is expected to carry out his or her responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

Justice and wealth creation

...if the deeper implications of justice are to be realized, other preconditions to the legitimate acquisition of wealth must be taken into account, and prevailing norms reassessed in their light:

- the relationship between minimum wage and the cost of living, especially in light of the contribution workers make to a company's success and their entitlement to a fair share of the profits
- the wide margin, often unjustifiable, between the production costs of certain goods and the price at which they are sold
- the question of the generation of wealth through measures that enrich the generality of the people.

based on UHJ, 2 April 2010

Unacceptable wealth creation

...certain approaches to obtaining wealth--so many of which involve the exploitation of others, the monopolization and manipulation of markets, and the production of goods that promote violence and immorality--are unworthy and unacceptable.

Sustainability Requires World Order

A **world federal system**, ruling the whole earth and exercising unchallengeable authority over its **unimaginably vast resources**,... liberated from the curse of war and its miseries, and bent on the exploitation of all the available sources of **energy** on the surface of the planet,... such is the goal towards which humanity, impelled by the unifying forces of life, is moving.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 203-204)

A serene sunset scene over a calm body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright, shimmering path of light across the water's surface. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds. In the foreground, the dark silhouettes of palm trees frame the view on both sides.

Applying these ecological and economic principles can guide us towards a sustainable world order

Thank you

Ecological and Economic Principles for a New World Order

Arthur Lyon Dahl Ph.D.

International Environment Forum (IEF)

<http://iefworld.org>

and
ebbf

<http://www.ebbf.org>

September 2013

World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*,
1987, p. 43

based on (Universal House of Justice, One Common Faith, 2005, p. 5)

based on (Universal House of Justice, One Common Faith, 2005, p. 10)

Impacts of Materialism

Materialism, rooted in the West, has now spread to every corner of the planet, breeding, in the name of a strong global economy and human welfare, a culture of consumerism. It skilfully and ingeniously promotes a habit of consumption that seeks to satisfy the basest and most selfish desires, while encouraging the expenditure of wealth so as to prolong and exacerbate social conflict. One result is a deepening confusion on the part of young people everywhere, a sense of hopelessness in the ranks of those who would drive progress, and the emergence of a myriad social maladies.

UHJ, 2 April 2010

8

Universal House of Justice, *To the believers in the Cradle of the Faith*, 2 April 2010

Growth-debt Trap

- Economic growth today is largely fueled by consumer, corporate and government borrowing
- As long as the growth rate is higher than the interest rate, reimbursement is possible
- If growth slows or stops, defaulting is inevitable
- The consumer society was a necessary creation to maintain the economic growth/debt paradigm
- Growth in energy and resource consumption cannot continue much longer as we reach planetary boundaries of the Earth system

Fossil fuels and climate change

- The accepted limit for global warming without significant damage to the planet is 2°C, and this is probably too high
- The estimated remaining capacity of the atmosphere to absorb carbon without going past this limit is 565 gigatons of CO₂, which may be reached in 16 years
- Proven oil, coal and gas reserves total 2,795 gigatons (not counting unconventional sources)
- To prevent catastrophic climate change, 80% of proven reserves need to be taken off asset accounts and left in the ground

10

Bill. 2012. Global Warming's Terrifying
Rolling Stone, 2 August 2012.

ollingstone.com/politics/news/global-
rrifying-new-math-20120719

ker Initiative. n.d. Unburnable Carbon -
d's financial markets carrying a carbon
://www.carbontracker.org/carbonbubble

Arctic Methane

- Warming temperatures in the Arctic are releasing methane from permafrost and hydrates under the sea
- Plumes of gas a kilometer in diameter have been observed in the East Siberian Sea
- The release of 50 gigatonnes of methane over a decade will bring forward the date of a global 2°C increase by 15-35 years
- The resulting impacts from flooding, sea level rise, damage to agriculture and human health will cost \$60 trillion (the size of the global economy in 2012)

11

McGrath, Matt. 2013. Arctic methane 'time bomb' could have huge economic costs. BBC News, Science & Environment, 24 July 2013, citing an article in Nature by Gail Whiteman and Peter Wadhams.

Beddington, John. 2009. speech at GovNet SDUK09.
<http://www.govnet.co.uk/news/govnet/professor-sir-john-beddingtons-speech-at-sduk-09>

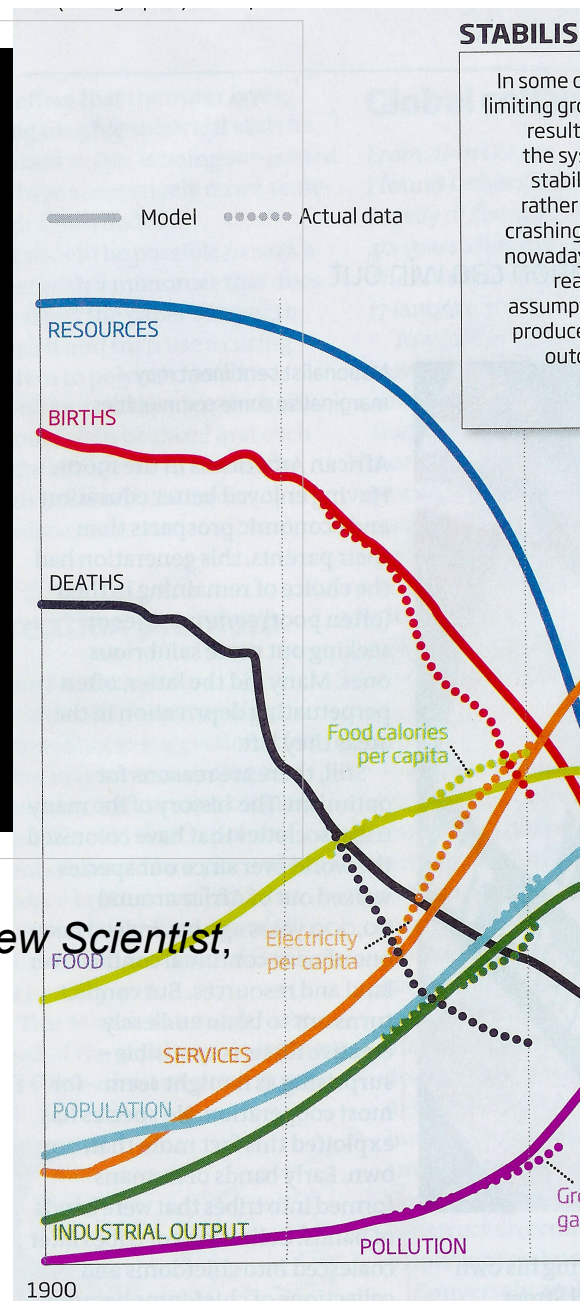
Sample, Ian. 2009. World faces 'perfect storm' of problems by 2030, chief scientist to warn. guardian.co.uk, 18 March 2009.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/2009/mar/18/perfect-storm-john-beddington-energy-food-climate>

Meadows, Donella H., Dennis L. Meadows and Jorgen Randers. 1992. *Beyond the Limits: Confronting Global Collapse, Envisioning a Sustainable Future*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing Company.

Meadows, Donella, Jorgen Randers and Dennis Meadows. 2004. *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Update*. Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, Vermont. 338 p.

Where are we now?

MacKenzie, Debora. 2012 Doomsday Book. *New Scientist*, 7 January 2012, pp. 38-41.



MacKenzie, Debora. 2012 Doomsday Book. *New Scientist*, 7 January 2012, pp. 38-41.

Turchin, Peter, 2010. Political instability may be a contributor in the coming decade. *Nature*, vol. 463, Issue 7281, p. 608. (4 February 2010).
doi:10.1038/463608a

cited in Holmes, Bob, 2012, *Revolutionary Cycles*, *New Scientist*, 18 August 2012, p. 46-49

We need an alternative to the consumer society

- sufficiently attractive to overcome resistance and habit
- worth sacrificing the superficial for what is deeper and more fundamentally rewarding
- effort comparable to religious conversion
- combines individual transformation with social action

18

Dahl, Arthur Lyon. 2012a. Alternatives to the Consumer Society. Paper presented at the PERL International Conference, Berlin, 19-20 March 2012.
<http://iefworld.org/ddahl12a>

A higher human purpose

How... can we resolve the paralyzing contradiction that, on the one hand, we desire a world of peace and prosperity, while, on the other, much of economic and psychological theory depicts human beings as slaves to self-interest? The faculties needed to construct a more just and sustainable social order—moderation, justice, love, reason, sacrifice and service to the common good—have too often been dismissed as naïve ideals. Yet, it is these, and related qualities that must be harnessed to overcome the traits of ego, greed, apathy and violence, which are often rewarded by the market and political forces driving current patterns of unsustainable consumption and production.

(BIC 2010)

Bahá'í International Community. 2010. *Rethinking Prosperity: Forging Alternatives to a Culture of Consumerism*. Contribution to the 18th Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, New York, 3 May 2010.

<http://bic.org/statements-and-reports/bic-statements/10-0503.htm>

(Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, p.13)

Primacy of Oneness of Humanity

- Since humanity is one, each person is born into the world as a trust of the whole, and each bears a responsibility for the welfare of all humanity
- This collective trusteeship constitutes the moral foundation of human rights and environmental governance
- The welfare of each country and community can only be derived from the well-being of the whole planet

(Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, p. 13-14)



Ecological Principles

(Garden of Linnaeus)

Sustainability - an ethical concept

As trustees or stewards of the planet's resources and biodiversity, we must:

- ensure sustainability and equity of resource use into distant future
- consider the environmental consequences of development activities
- temper our actions with moderation and humility
- value nature in more than economic terms
- understand the natural world and its role in humanity's collective development both material and spiritual

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*. 1998)

25

*(based on Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*. 1998)*

Sustainability - fundamental responsibility

Sustainable environmental management must come to be seen not as a discretionary commitment mankind can weigh against other competing interests, but rather as a fundamental responsibility that must be shouldered, a pre-requisite for spiritual development as well as the individual's physical survival.

(based on Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*. 1998)

26

*(based on Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development*. 1998)*

(Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 17 February 1933, Compilation on Social and Economic Development, p. 4)

(Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development: Initial Considerations Regarding the Creation of Spiritually Based Indicators for Development*. A concept paper written for the World Faiths and Development Dialogue, Lambeth Palace, London, 18-19 February 1998)

('Abdu'l-Bahá, in Compilation on Huququ'llah, p. 14-15; Compilation on Social and Economic Development, p. 12)

('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 158-159)

('Abdu'l-Bahá, in J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*. Chpt. 3, p. 35)



(based on *The Prosperity of Humankind*, Bahá'í International Community, 1995)

(based on Baha'i International Community, *Prosperity of Humankind*)

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. 1978, p. 138)

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, para. 33, p. 30)

(*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, note 56 to para. 33, p. 192-193)

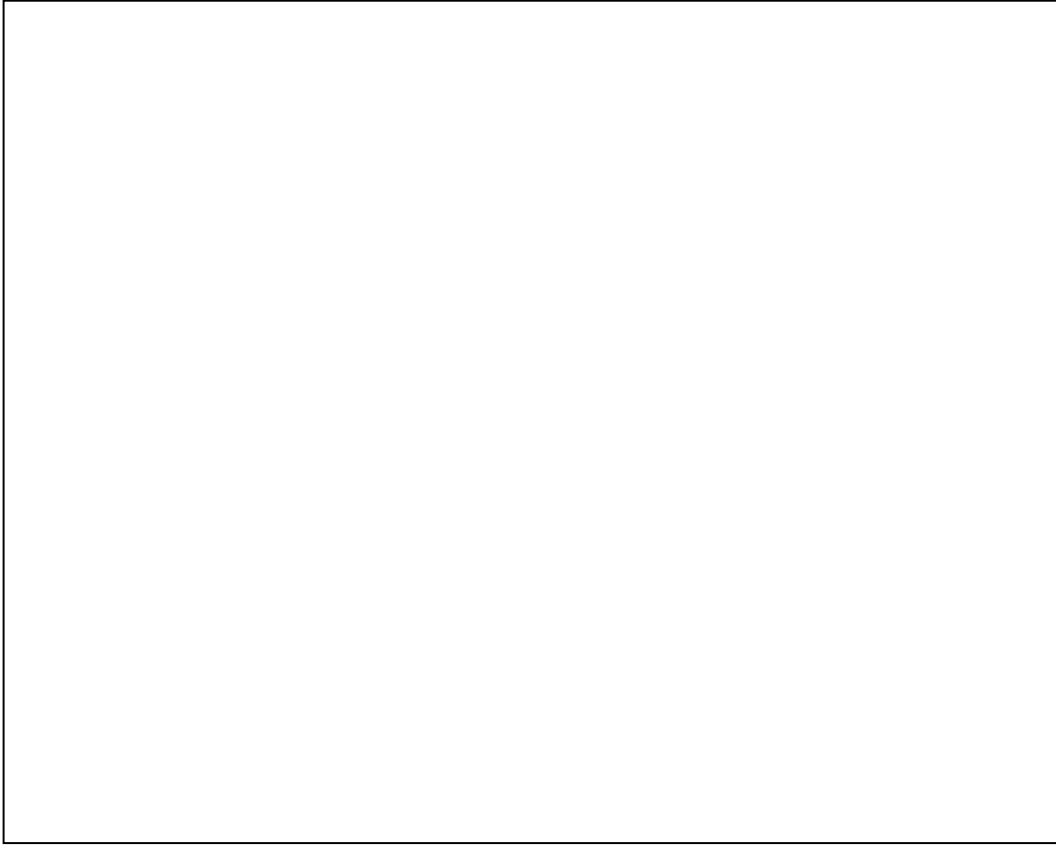
(Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words* (Persian) 53)

(Bahá'u'lláh [to the Sultan of Turkey], *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, CXIV, pp. 235-236)

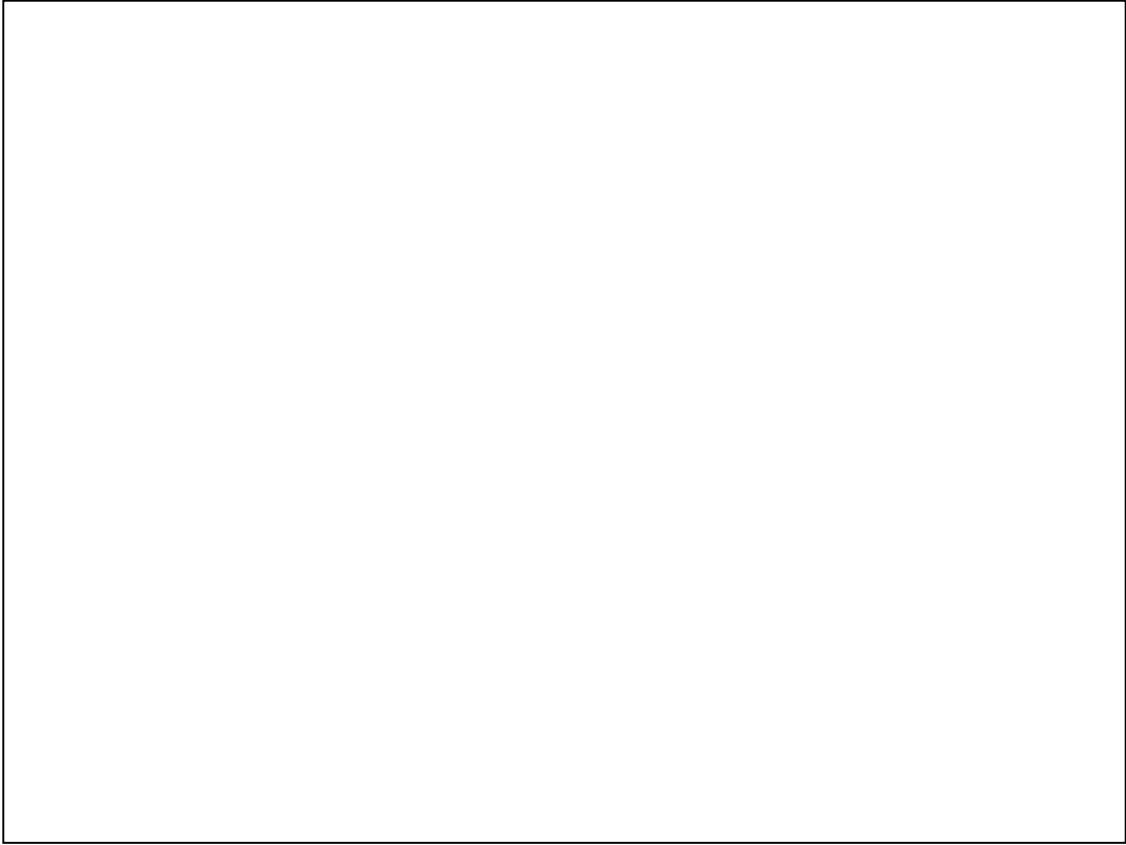
(Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 37)

('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Foundations of World Unity*, p. 43-44)

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, 79, p. 115)



Bahá'u'lláh, Súriy-i-Mulúk §19, in *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 193. Haifa, Bahá'í World Centre, 2002



Based on Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development: Initial Considerations Regarding the Creation of Spiritually Based Indicators for Development*. A concept paper written for the World Faiths and Development Dialogue, Lambeth Palace, London, 18-19 February 1998

(Bahá'í International Community, *Valuing Spirituality in Development: Initial Considerations Regarding the Creation of Spiritually Based Indicators for Development*. A concept paper written for the World Faiths and Development Dialogue, Lambeth Palace, London, 18-19 February 1998)

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development: Initial Considerations Regarding the Creation of Spiritually Based Indicators for Development. A concept paper written for the World Faiths and Development Dialogue, Lambeth Palace, London, 18-19 February 1998)

A new standard for economic conduct

...eschew... dishonesty in one's transactions or the economic exploitation of others. There should be no contradiction between one's economic conduct and one's beliefs. By applying in one's life principles of fairness and equity, each person can uphold a standard far above the low threshold by which the world measures itself.

UHJ Ridvan 2012 48

Social and Economic Justice

Social justice will be attained only when every member of society enjoys a relative degree of material prosperity and gives due regard to the acquisition of spiritual qualities. The solution, then, to prevailing economic difficulties is to be sought as much in the application of spiritual principles as in the implementation of scientific methods and approaches.

UHJ, 2 April 2010

49

Universal House of Justice, *To the believers in the Cradle of the Faith*, 2 April 2010

Ends and Means

Vigilance must be exercised in distinguishing "means" from "ends".

The acquisition of wealth is acceptable and praiseworthy to the extent that it serves as a means for achieving higher ends:

- providing people with basic necessities
- fostering social progress
- promoting the welfare of society
- contributing to the establishment of a world civilization.

To make the accumulation of wealth the central purpose is unworthy.

based on UHJ, 2 April 2010

50

Universal House of Justice, *To the believers in the Cradle of the Faith*, 2 April 2010

Goals and improper means

Regrettably, a number of today's leaders-- political, social, and religious--as well as some of the directors of financial markets, executives of multinational corporations, chiefs of commerce and industry, and ordinary people who succumb to social pressure and ignore the call of their conscience, ...justify any means in order to achieve their goals.

UHQ, 2 April 2010

51

Universal House of Justice, *To the believers in the Cradle of the Faith*, 2 April 2010

Wealth and its uses

Wealth is praiseworthy in the highest degree, if it is acquired... in commerce, agriculture, crafts and industry, if the measures adopted... in generating wealth serve to enrich the generality of the people, and if the wealth thus obtained is expended for philanthropic purposes and the promotion of knowledge, for the establishment of schools and industry and the advancement of education, and in general for the welfare of society.

based on UHJ, 2 April 2010

Justice in the enterprise

...the acquisition of wealth should be governed by the requirements of justice.... An employer and employee, for example, are bound by the laws and conventions that regulate their work, and each is expected to carry out his or her responsibilities with honesty and integrity.

UHQ, 2 April 2010

53

Universal House of Justice, *To the believers in the Cradle of the Faith*, 2 April 2010

Justice and wealth creation

...if the deeper implications of justice are to be realized, other preconditions to the legitimate acquisition of wealth must be taken into account, and prevailing norms reassessed in their light:

- the relationship between minimum wage and the cost of living, especially in light of the contribution workers make to a company's success and their entitlement to a fair share of the profits
- the wide margin, often unjustifiable, between the production costs of certain goods and the price at which they are sold
- the question of the generation of wealth through measures that enrich the generality of the people.

based on UHJ, 2 April 2010

Unacceptable wealth creation

...certain approaches to obtaining wealth--so many of which involve the exploitation of others, the monopolization and manipulation of markets, and the production of goods that promote violence and immorality--are unworthy and unacceptable.

UHJ, 2 April 2010

55

Universal House of Justice, *To the believers in the Cradle of the Faith*, 2 April 2010

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 203-4)

