

Satisfying Our Common Lots Without Despoiling Our Natural Domicile: All Hands on Deck.

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Abstract:

In a competitive world, development and the environment are closely intertwined. Development cannot stop for the sake of the environment. The environment is the only pathway from which we draw our sustenance. It is, therefore, an indisputable fact that our very survival depends on the environment. The problem arises when attempting to satisfy our insatiable needs whilst subjecting other components of the earth system into perpetual savagery. That said, the focus of this paper is to stress the need to integrate environmental considerations into our everyday lives. This paper has carefully articulated the concepts of environment and development by contributing to the debate of development without running into resource constraints. Furthermore, environmental thoughts have also been enunciated to season the arguments.

Keywords: *Development, Environment, Resource constraints, Environmental concerns.*

Introduction

A proper understanding and conceptualization of the interrelationship between the environment and development is essential and thrive on sound strategies for the protection and improvement of the planet. It will be too nauseating to contemplate when we remain unconcerned and unperturbed as our cherished environment continues to deteriorate. The fundamental question which confronts the world today is how to meet our unlimited wants (i.e. basic needs) without simultaneously jeopardizing the resource base i.e. the environment from which those unlimited wants must be met. A healthy natural environment is the foundation of successful long-term development (Catholic Church & McDonagh, 2016). In a world where the vast majority of people make their living from their environments and where climate change increasingly places all civilizations at risk, a healthy productive environment is not optional, but, rather, foundational to all developmental transformation, especially for the most vulnerable settlers (Pope Francis, 2015).

The researchers have the intent to reposition the theme for this review to read “Development without Destruction”, “Sustainable Consumption and Production” or simply, “Development in Well-being”. The food, water, and air we consume are also in a state of decay (United Nations Environment Programme, 2015). It is often believed that this decay is normal, the ways things have always been (Pieterse, 2009). It is therefore proper to discount the overwhelming evidence that these are a recent development (United Nations Development Programme, 2015). Humanity’s inability to fit its activities into the pattern of the earth is changing planetary systems, fundamentally. Many such changes are accompanied by life-threatening hazards. This new reality, from which there is no escape, must be recognized and managed appropriately (Hoover & Harder, 2014). It is an indisputable fact that people can build and make a future that is more prosperous, juster, friendlier and more secure without subjecting the environment to unforgivable hardships (Husaini, Jusoh & Kassim, 2018). This concept paper begins by briefly reviewing the concepts of environment and development. The researchers have gone at length to demystify the intimate relationship between the environment and development. The researchers then considered some environmental protection thoughts situated within the broad tenets of sustainable development keeping Ghana in mind. This facilitated to get to the roots of the present situation (i.e. despoiling the environment beyond repair) to consider not

only its symptoms but also its deepest cause. Finally, the researchers advanced some broader proposals and inspired guidelines dealing effectively with this interwoven discourse which would involve each of us as individuals, and also affect international policy.

The Concepts Environment and Development

The term environment has its origin from the French word “environ” which means everything that surrounds us. The environment is everything around us which includes all living and non-living things with which we interact (Miller & Spoolman, 2007). The environment is the key to the prosperity of each community; therefore, it is very important. The environment is the source of production and all processes on the earth’s surface (Ager & Metzler, 2012). It is also defined as all living and non-living things which encompass the built environment (i.e. chain of social relationships and institutions that shape our daily lives) and the natural environment (Danso-Wiredu, 2019). This implies the concept environment is used to describe, in the aggregate, all the external forces, influences and conditions, which affect the life, nature, behaviour and the growth, development and maturity of living organisms. Thus the 'environment' may be regarded as a 'space' or a 'field' in which networks of relationships, interconnections and interactions between entities occur. The notion of interrelationship is a central one in environmental science and management since many environmental issues have occurred because one environmental system has been disturbed or degraded, either accidentally or deliberately, as a result of changes in another. Knowledge of the environment provides an approach towards the understanding of the planet and the impact human life has on the environment (Danso-Wiredu, 2019). Due to the important role the environment plays in the survival of humankind, it is related to almost every discipline studied such as; social studies, biotechnology, chemistry, economics, geography, geology, physiology, social science and hydrology (Danso-Wiredu, 2019).

Conversely, development is a contested concept, implying that it has meant different things from one historical situation to another and from one actor to another (Hettne, 2009). Development is, clearly, not a neutral procedure, despite the different concepts attributed to development over time (Lozano, 2011). In the field of economics, development is related to an increase in the production of products and services within an economy. The basic indicator used for development is the gross domestic product, defined as “an aggregate measure of production equal to the sum of the gross values added of all resident, institutional units engaged in production (plus any taxes, and minus any subsidies, on products not included in the value of their outputs) (Panayotou, 2000). However, during the past century, the word “development” has been used in numerous contexts because of its ability to guide thought and behaviour (Rist, 2008). As Rist (2008) argues, the strength of development discourse comes from its power to seduce, in every sense of the term, to charm, to please, to fascinate, to set dreaming, but also to abuse, to turn away from the truth, to deceive. It is a fact that there is no consensus of the scientific community on how the term can be understood.

The various theories of development, the different sociopolitical and philosophical viewpoints, and perceptions highlight a series of concepts with an objective perspective, such as growth, development, movement, alteration, radical change, progress, management, reform, modernization, modification, transformation, action-reaction, which characterize the quantitative and qualitative figures of development (Mckeown & Nolet, 2012). Rokos (2005) defines development as a new, improved dynamic balance between human relations and systems of land use, production, employment, consumption, and distribution, which aims at the optimal use of physical and socioeconomic resources, according to the average social consciousness of the citizens, the specific social dynamics, and the political will of authorities. Talmage (2014) points out that development is an effective change process aimed toward positive impact that is facilitated through the efficient use of resources. However, during the previous century Western perceptions about the world and history have created a broad trend, according to which development is associated with something positive, something desirable, regardless if development refers to societies, regions, or specific population groups (Pope Francis, 2015). For many people, ideas of development are linked to concepts of modernity (Willis, 2005). Some of them interpreted this diffusion of modernity as development and progress, while others connected it with the alienation of cultural practices, the destruction of habitat, and loss of quality of life (Encyclical Letter, 2009). This is what Horkheimer and Adorno proposed in their work: *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Talmage, 2014) in which they argue that the logic behind the rationalism of the enlightenment is the logic of domination and oppression.

The desire for dominance over nature meant domination over men and could only ultimately lead to a “nightmarish situation of sovereignty over ourselves.” However, despite the reservations, development was the dominant ideology of the previous century. Describing this situation Wolfgang Sachs notes: “*Like a towering lighthouse guiding sailors towards the coast, development stood as the idea which oriented emerging nations in their journey through post-war history.*” (Ager & Metzler, 2012). This lighthouse of development was created just after World War II. Development became significant when the Western world confronted the new challenge of rebuilding countries, especially in Europe, a continent that had been shattered by war (Rapley, 2007). As Potter et al. (2008) reported, many development theorists support that the modern era of development started with a speech made by President Truman in 1949, in which he employed the term “underdeveloped areas” to describe what was soon to be known as the Third World concluding with the duty of the West to bring development to such relatively underdeveloped countries and urging other countries to follow the Western development policy (Rapley, 2007). In this general context, the core meaning of development was catching up with the advanced industrialized countries (Pieterse, 2009).

Relationship between the Environment and Development: Development without Running in Resource Constraints.

The growth of world population and production combined with unsustainable consumption patterns places increasingly severe stress on the life-supporting capacities of our planet. These interactive processes affect the use of land, water, air, energy and other resources (Panayotou, 2000). Rapidly growing cities, unless well-managed, face major environmental problems. The increase in both the number and size of cities calls for greater attention to issues of local government and municipal management (United Nations Environment Programme, 2011). The century brings to us compelling and success stories: infants mortality is falling; human life expectancy is appreciating; the proportion of the world’s teeming adults who can read and write is climbing; the proportion of children starting school is rising; and the global food production increases faster than the population grows thanks to the emergence of genetic engineering through genetically modified food production (United Nations Environment Programme, 2011). Interestingly, the same process that has produced these gains have given rise to pathways that the planet and its people can no longer bear. These are environmental trends that threaten to radically alter the planet, that threaten the lives of many species upon it including the human species (Danso-Wiredu, 2019).

The planet’s species are under stress and there is a growing scientific consensus that species are disappearing at rates never before witnessed on the planet, although there is also controversy over those rates and the risks they entail. Yet there is still time to halt this (Green Growth Knowledge Platform, 2013). It is not enough, however, to think of different species merely as potential “resources” to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves. Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see because they have been lost forever (Pope Francis, 2015). The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. It may well disturb us to learn of the extinction of mammals or birds since they are more visible (Pope Francis, 2015; Catholic Church & McDonagh, 2016)). But the good functioning of ecosystems also requires fungi, algae, worms, insects, reptiles and an innumerable variety of microorganisms. Some less numerous species, although generally unseen, nonetheless play a critical role in maintaining the equilibrium of a particular place (Pope Francis, 2015).

Human beings must intervene when a geosystem reaches a critical state (FAO, 2014). The diversity of species is necessary for the normal functioning of ecosystems and the biosphere as a whole. The genetic material in wild species contributes billions of dollars yearly to the world economy in the form of improved crop species, new drugs and medicines, and raw materials for industry. But utility aside, there are also moral, ethical, cultural, aesthetic, and purely scientific reasons for conserving wild beings (Green Growth Platform, 2013). Averagely, 6 million hectares of productive dryland turns into worthless desert. If not properly checked, in the next three decades, this would amount to an area roughly as large as Saudi Arabia (United Nations Environment Programme, 2011). More than 11 million hectares of forests are destroyed yearly, and this, over three decades, would equal an area about the size of India (Advertising Standards Council of India, 2011). Much of this forest is converted to low-grade farmland unable to support the farmers who settle it. In Europe, acid precipitation kills forests and lakes and damages the artistic and

architectural heritage of nations; it may have acidified vast tracts of soil beyond reasonable hope of repair (UNEP, 2011b).

The burning of fossil fuels puts into the atmosphere carbon dioxide, which causes global warming. This 'greenhouse effect' may by early next century have increased average global temperatures enough to shift agricultural production areas, raise sea levels to flood coastal cities, and disrupt national economies (EC, FAO, OECD, United Nations & WB, 2012). Other industrial gases threaten to deplete the planet's protective ozone shield to such an extent that the number of human and animal cancers would rise sharply and the oceans' food chain would be disrupted. The industrial hub and agricultural sector continue to put toxic substances into the human food chain and underground water tables beyond the reach of cleansing (Danso-Wiredu, 2019). Due to an ill-considered exploitation of nature, humanity runs the risk of destroying it and becoming, in turn, a victim of this degradation the urgent need for a radical change in the conduct of humanity", since "the most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic social and moral progress, will definitively turn against man" (Earth Policy Institute, 2013).

Human beings frequently seem to see no other meaning in their natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption. In this regard, attempts are made indiscriminately in exploiting the resources beyond repair and human comprehension (Green Growth Knowledge Platform, 2013). The world cannot be analyzed by isolating only one of its aspects, since "the book of nature is one and indivisible", and includes the environment, life, sexuality, the family, social relations, and so forth" (Pope Francis, 2015, pg. 106). It follows that the deterioration of nature is closely connected to the culture which shapes human coexistence which implies that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behaviour (Catholic Church & McDonagh, 2016). The social environment has also suffered damage. Both are ultimately due to the same evil: the notion that there are no indisputable truths to guide our lives, and hence human freedom is limitless. We have forgotten that "man is not only a freedom which he creates for himself (Benedict XVI, 2009). Many of the negative aspects of development have so impressed themselves on the minds of those concerned with the environment, that the question is often asked "why development?". Some, indeed, advocate arresting economic growth within the interest of environmental protection (UNEP, 2011).

It is true that, in the past, industrial and agricultural development have created environmental problems, such as water, soil and air pollution with consequent cost to human health and wellbeing, the spread of the deserts through the mismanagement by a man of natural ecosystems, and so on. Such problems are seldom localized and, through their interactions with other factors, frequently become matters of regional or global concern (UNEP, 2011). There has been a growing realization in national governments and multilateral institutions that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environmental issues; many forms of development erode the environmental resources upon which they must be based, and environmental degradation can undermine economic development (Global Ecolabelling Network, 2013). A mainspring of economic growth is a new technology, and while this technology offers the potential for slowing the dangerously rapid consumption of finite resources, it also entails high risks, including new forms of pollution and the introduction to the planet of new variations of life forms that could change evolutionary pathways (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013). Meanwhile, the industries most heavily reliant on environmental resources and most heavily polluting are growing most rapidly in the developing world, where there is both more urgency for growth and less capacity to minimize damaging side effects (McKinsey Global Institute, 2011).

In many parts of the world, the population is growing at rates that cannot be sustained by available environmental resources, at rates that are outstripping any reasonable expectations of improvements in housing, health care, food security, or energy supplies (UNEP, 2013). The issue is not just the numbers of people, but how those numbers relate to available resources (UNEP, 2013). Thus the 'population problem' must be dealt with in part by efforts to eliminate mass poverty, to assure more equitable access to resources, and by education to improve the human potential to manage those resources (UNEP, 2013; Sustainable Production and Consumption, 2015). Tribal and indigenous peoples will need special attention as the forces of economic development disrupt their traditional lifestyles, lifestyles that can offer modern societies many

lessons in the management of resources in the complex forest, mountain, and dryland ecosystems (UNEP, 2015). Some are threatened with virtual extinction by insensitive development over which they have no control. Their traditional rights should be recognized and they should be given a decisive voice in formulating policies about resource development in their areas (UNEP, 2015).

Environmental stress has often been seen as the result of the growing demand for scarce resources and the pollution generated by the rising living standards of the relatively affluent. But poverty itself pollutes the environment, creating environmental stress in a different way (Green Growth Knowledge Platform, 2013). Those who are poor and hungry will often destroy their immediate environment to survive: They will cut down forests; their livestock will overgraze grasslands; they will overuse marginal land, and in growing numbers, they will crowd into congested cities. The cumulative effect of these changes is so far-reaching as to make poverty itself a major global scourge (Green Growth Knowledge Platform, 2013). On the other hand, where economic growth has led to improvements in living standards, it has sometimes been achieved in ways that are globally damaging in the longer term. Much of the improvement in the past has been based on the use of increasing amounts of raw materials, energy, chemicals, and synthetics and on the creation of pollution that is not adequately accounted for in figuring the costs of production processes (CSIRO & IGES, 2012). These trends have had unforeseen effects on the environment. Thus today's environmental challenges arise both from the lack of development and the unintended consequences of some forms of economic growth (Green Growth Knowledge Platform, 2013). In conclusion, The Secretary-General of The Norwegian Red Cross in a World Commission on Environment and Development, Public Hearing remarked “ If people destroy vegetation to get land, food, fodder, fuel, or timber, the soil is no longer protected.” Rain creates surface runoff, and the soil erodes. When the soil is gone, no water is retained and the land can no longer produce enough food, fodder, fuel, or timber, so people need to turn to a new land and start the process all over again. All major disaster problems in the Third World are essentially unsolved development problems. Disaster prevention is thus primarily an aspect of development, and this must be a development that takes place within sustainable limits (Green Growth Knowledge Platform, 2013; Pope Francis).

Environmental Protection Thoughts: The journey so far

The environmental difficulties that confront us are not new, but only recently have we begun to understand their complexity. Previously our main concerns centred on the effects of development on the environment (Pope Francis, 2015). Today, we need to be equally concerned about how environmental degradation can dampen or reverse economic development. In one area after another, environmental degradation is eroding the potential for development. Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in “lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern societies (Pope Francis, 2015; UNEP, 2015; Catholic Church & McDonagh, 2016)). The roots of environmental problems require that we look for solutions not only in technology but in a change of humanity; otherwise, we would be dealing merely with symptoms. Second, environmental stresses and patterns of economic development are linked one to another. Thus agricultural policies may lie at the root of the land, water, and forest degradation. Energy policies are associated with the global greenhouse effect, acidification, and deforestation for fuelwood in many developing nations (Pope Francis, 2015)). These stresses all threaten economic development. Thus economics and ecology must be completely integrated into decision making and lawmaking processes not just to protect the environment, but also to protect and promote development (Pope Francis, 2015). The Head of Climate Change and Sustainable Development at the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr Peter J. Dery, at a capacity-building workshop on climate change and green economy maintained that “as a guiding principle underpinning the strategy to transition Ghana into green economy, there is the need for metropolitan, municipal and district assemblies (MMDAs) not only to go green but mainstream climate adaptation and mitigation measures in their development plans and projects.” “It is important to appreciate and factor the inter-generational principle into the country’s development agenda to take care of long-term developmental goals instead of short-term interests” (Agyemang & Ocloo, 2018, p.26).

The economy is not just about the production of wealth, and ecology is not just about the protection of nature; they are both equally relevant for improving a lot of humankind. Caring for ecosystems demands far-sightedness, since no one looking for quick and easy profit is truly interested in their preservation. But the cost of the damage caused by such selfish lack of concern is much greater than the economic benefits to be

obtained. Where certain species are destroyed or seriously harmed, the values involved are incalculable (Encyclical Letter, 2009; Pope Francis, 2015; UNEP, 2015). We can be silent witnesses to terrible injustices if we think that we can obtain significant benefits by making the rest of humanity, present and future, pay the extremely high costs of environmental deterioration (FAO, 2014). The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. The deterioration of the environment and society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet: “Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest” (Bolivian Bishops’ Conference, 2012). For example, the depletion of fishing reserves especially hurts small fishing communities without the means to replace those resources; water pollution particularly affects the poor who cannot buy bottled water, and rises in the sea level mainly affect impoverished coastal populations who have nowhere else to go. The impact of present imbalances is also seen in the premature death of many of the poor, in conflicts sparked by the shortage of resources, and in any number of other problems which are insufficiently represented on global agendas (Global Ecolabelling Network, 2013).

These scenarios have drawn the attention of concerned world leaders. The Member of Parliament, House of Commons, Charles Caccia has this to say “How long can we go on and safely pretend that the environment is not the economy, is not healthy, is not the prerequisite to development, is not recreation? Is it realistic to see ourselves as managers of an entity out there called the environment, extraneous to us, an alternative to the economy, too expensive a value to protect in difficult economic times?” When we organize ourselves starting from this premise, we do so with dangerous consequences to our economy, health, and industrial growth. We are now just beginning to realize that we must find an alternative to our ingrained behaviour of burdening future generations resulting from our misplaced belief that there is a choice between the economy and the environment. That choice, in the long term, turns out to be an illusion with awesome consequences for humanity. Humanity can make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. In this regard The President of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Akuffo has launched the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programme (NAELP) to help reduce the hardships in mining communities endured as a result of activities of Operation Halt in those areas (Agyemang & Ocloo, 2021). President Akuffo Addo remarked, “The programme is intended to provide good economic livelihood options to the illegal mining and associated activities, to enable those adversely impacted to work and support themselves and their families” (Agyemang & Ocloo, 2021, p.18).

The concept of sustainable development does imply limits - not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities. But technology and social organization can be both managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth. Hon. Victoria Chitepo, Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism, Government of Zimbabwe has in her own right averred that the remarkable achievements of the celebrated Industrial Revolution are now beginning seriously to be questioned principally because the environment was not considered at the time (Global Ecolabelling Network, 2013). It was felt that the sky was so vast and clear nothing could ever change its colour, our rivers so big and their water so plentiful that no amount of human activity could ever change their quality, and there were trees and natural forests so plentiful that we will never finish them. After all, they grow again. Today we should know better. The alarming rate at which the Earth's surface is being denuded of its natural vegetative cover seems to indicate that the world may soon become devoid of trees through clearing for human developments.

Ways of dealing effectively with environmental concerns

Finally, we need to acknowledge that different approaches and lines of thought have emerged regarding this situation and its possible solutions. At one extreme, we find those who doggedly uphold the myth of progress and tell us that ecological problems will solve themselves simply with the application of new technology and without any need for ethical considerations or deep change (John Paul II, 1990). At the other extreme are those who view men and women and all their interventions as no more than a threat, jeopardizing the global ecosystem, and consequently, the presence of human beings on the planet should be reduced and all forms of intervention prohibited. Viable future scenarios will have to be generated between these extremes since there is no one path to a solution). The Earth is one but the world is not. We all depend

on one biosphere for sustaining our lives. Yet each community, each country, strives for survival and prosperity with little regard for its impact on others.

Some consume the Earth's resources at a rate that would leave little for future generations. Others, many more in number, consume far too little and live with the prospect of hunger, squalor, disease, and early death. The failures that we need to correct arise both from poverty and from the short-sighted way in which we have often pursued prosperity. Many parts of the world are caught in a vicious downwards spiral: Poor people are forced to overuse environmental resources to survive from day to day, and the impoverishment of their environment further impoverishes them, making their survival even more difficult and uncertain. The prosperity attained in some parts of the world is often precarious, as it has been secured through farming, forestry, and industrial practices that bring profit and progress only over the short term. This makes a variety of proposals possible, all capable of entering into dialogue to develop comprehensive solutions (Apostolic Exhortation, 2013).

If needs are to be met on a sustainable basis the Earth's natural resource base must be conserved and enhanced. Major changes in policies will be needed to cope with the industrial world's current high levels of consumption, the increases in consumption needed to meet minimum standards in developing countries and expected population growth. However, the case for the conservation of nature should not rest only with development goals. It is part of our moral obligation to other living beings and future generations. Pressure on resources increases when people lack alternatives. Development policies must widen people's options for earning a sustainable livelihood, particularly for resource-poor households and in areas under ecological stress. In a hilly area, for instance, economic self-interest and ecology can be combined by helping farmers shift from grain to tree crops by providing them with advice, equipment, and marketing assistance. Programmes to protect the incomes of farmers, fishermen, and foresters against short-term price declines may decrease their need to overexploit resources. Following this introduction of the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programme (NAELP), the following modules were captured to further protect the environment and income of the citizenry, thus, National Land Reclamation and Re-Afforestation Programme, Agriculture and Agro-Processing, Apprenticeship, Skills Training and Entrepreneurship, Responsible, Viable and Sustainable Small-Scale Community Mining and Community Enhancement Project (Agyemang & Ocloo, 2021, p.18). The President at the launch of the programme reiterated "In our effort to ensure that we protect the environment, we had to take far-reaching measures, including, authorizing the military in Operation Halt II to take action against some illegal miners, as well as decommissioning and demobilizing machines, and equipment used for illegal mining in forest reserves and water bodies, which have been declared Red Zones for mining". "Far-reaching as these measures may be, they were necessary to halt and reverse the trend of ever-increasing turbidity of our waters, and to protect and safeguard our environment for posterity as dictated by our national Constitution" (Agyemang & Ocloo, 2021, p.18). An important narrative worth mentioning was echoed in the President's closing remarks captured as "Given that most of our degraded lands are due to illegal mining activities, it is just fitting, that any programme targeting illegal mining includes a reclamation programme. This component of the Programme will restore such lands into economically viable lands, creating job opportunities for the youth, landowners, and communities at large" (Agyemang & Ocloo, 2021, p.18).

The conservation of agricultural resources is an urgent task because in many parts of the world cultivation has already been extended to marginal lands, and fishery and forestry resources have been overexploited. These resources must be conserved and enhanced to meet the needs of growing populations. Land use in agriculture and forestry must be based on a scientific assessment of land capacity, and the annual depletion of topsoil, fish stock, or forest resources must not exceed the rate of regeneration (Apostolic Exhortation, 2013). The pressures on agricultural land from crop and livestock production can be partly relieved by increasing productivity. But short-sighted, short-term improvements in productivity can create different forms of ecological stress, such as the loss of genetic diversity in standing crops, salinization and alkalization of irrigated lands, nitrate pollution of groundwater, and pesticide residues in food. Ecologically more benign alternatives are available.

Future increases in productivity, in both developed and developing countries, should be based on the better-controlled application of water and agrochemicals, as well as on more extensive use of organic manures and non-chemical means of pest control. These alternatives can be promoted only by an agricultural policy based

on ecological realities. In the case of fisheries and tropical forestry, we rely largely on the exploitation of the naturally available stocks. The sustainable yield from these stocks may well fall short of demand. Hence it will be necessary to turn to methods that produce more fish, fuelwood, and forest products under controlled conditions. Substitutes for fuelwood can be promoted. If this proposal seems difficult and unattainable, stakeholders having the desire to protect the environment should increase prices of environmentally damaging goods and services, while increasing the returns for more sustainable approaches - leading to more sustainable production and consumption patterns. In a capacity-building workshop Mr Peter Dury, the Head of Climate Change and Sustainable Development stated “that for Ghana to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), conscious efforts ought to be made at all levels of national development to allow “us to go green and attain the SDGs and green economy” He stressed, “if we want to go green, we need to ensure biogas penetration to reduce waste, address environmental pollution and diseases and reap economic value from projects in our schools, universities, houses and communities .” (Agyemang & Ocloo, 2018, p.26)

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (2012) in a way of addressing environmental despoiling have proposed the following; firstly, reduce compliance costs by providing flexibility to polluters or users of natural resources to choose the most cost-efficient and environmentally effective measures. Secondly, minimise the overall cost of achieving a given pollution control target. Thirdly, creating dynamic incentives for investments to innovate and continually improve environmental technology, generating both environmental and financial benefits (“win-win”). Moreover, allocate property rights and responsibilities of firms, groups, or individuals so that they have both the incentive and the power to act in a more environmentally responsible manner. Lastly, raising revenues that can be used for environmental purposes or social benefits.

Governments can stem the destruction of tropical forests and other reservoirs of biological diversity while developing them economically. Reforming forest revenue systems and concession terms could raise billions of dollars of additional revenues, promote more efficient, long-term forest resource use, and curtail deforestation. Therefore, the cost of conservation will rise - directly and in terms of opportunities for development foregone. But over the long term, the development opportunities will be enhanced. For example, in Ghana, The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has expressed its commitment to work with stakeholders to whip up public interest in national efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the country (Agyemang, 2018). The Executive Director of EPA, Mr Peter Aburn Sarkodie in a press release on the outcomes of COP23 said “the government as part of its efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions, had adopted major reforestation programme that would not only curb carbon dioxide in the atmosphere but also help reduce desertification in the country” (Agyemang, 2018, p.42). He added that “ the government is leading head-on carbon emission reduction with well-planned reforestation programme and engaging young Ghanaians to plant more trees, as well as undertaking environmental education” (Agyemang, 2018, p.42). International development agencies should therefore give comprehensive and systematic attention to the problems and opportunities of species conservation. Following recommendations of the Brundtland Report, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the UN Commission On Sustainable Development,⁴ and several international, national, private sector and civil society initiatives turned their attention to just stewardship of the environment as a means to promote lasting human development. In all, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously.

Conclusion

We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affects us all. Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. While managing resources sustainably, an environmental policy that focuses mainly on the conservation and protection of resources must take due account of those who depend on the resources for their livelihoods. Otherwise, it could have an adverse impact both on poverty and on chances for long-term success in resource and environmental conservation. Equally, a development policy that focuses mainly on increasing the production of goods without addressing the sustainability of the resources on which production is based will sooner or later run into declining productivity, which could also lead to poverty. A specific anti-poverty strategy is therefore one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable

development. An effective strategy for tackling the problems of poverty, development and environment simultaneously should begin by focusing on resources, production and people and should cover demographic issues, enhanced health care and education, the rights of women, the role of youth and indigenous people and local communities and a democratic participation process in association with improved governance and a typical example is the National Alternative Employment and Livelihood Programme (NAELP).

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