

Social and economic responsibilities towards a sustainable environment

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In the age of the Anthropocene we are deeply concerned about climate change, but beyond this most dramatic negative impact of our activities, we are concerned with the consequences of multiple other human activities, such as pesticides affecting food chains, antibiotics reducing the quality of the water in our rivers, unequal economic and social developments and many more. This contribution is focused on our social, economic and environmental responsibilities to deal with the Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations Development Programme in January, 2016.

Socio-economic growth has come at a cost to our people and planet —and we have reached a tipping point where it may not be sustainable any longer. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) promise action on 17 critical social and environmental issues — from ending poverty and homelessness to protecting life below water, to responsible production and consumption and others— by 2030. They were proposed to replace the Millennium Development Goals, with one of the biggest differences being the greater role *enterprises and individuals* have to play. While most leaders have signed on to tackle the SDGs, governments can't achieve them alone. So the 17th goal is a call for partnerships between organisational systems and citizens to work towards solving collectively the world's biggest issues.

Improvements in the most significant sustainable development goals are necessary to increase social, economic and environmental stability and more significantly to increase the chances of a viable world, with capacity to respond to environmental threats and to make our world safer for us and our children.

Sustainability requires that our actions, whether as individuals, communities, enterprises, government agencies and others do not demand resources beyond the carrying capacity of their environments and on the hand that their externalities do not overload this capacity. These are homeostatic loops between organisational systems and their environments that are necessary to maintain stable relationships.

Often when dealing with socio-economic problems a systems approach is focused on studying parts and their interrelations. System dynamics is one such approach for this purpose. My purpose in this conversation is extending systems thinking into an operational discussion beyond a conceptual discussion. This is a methodological challenge, aimed at embodying what may appear as clear conceptual interdependencies into constrained interactions in the operational domains of the actors, from individuals to communities, enterprises to institutions in general from the local to the global. This is what I refer as a cybernetic (Viplan)



methodology, focused on communications and regulation. Which are the organisational structures required to transform SDGs into resources and relationships that provide for each of the actors carrying capacity in their environments, or in other words, how is it possible to coordinate SDGs for individuals and organisations to support their viability in healthy environments.

