

# The 39<sup>TH</sup> Annual

UNIS-UN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONFERENCE WORKING PAPER



**Sustainability:**

**Balancing People, Planet, and Profit**

5-6 MARCH 2015



The 39<sup>th</sup> Annual UNIS-UN  
Conference Programme

**Sustainability:**

Balancing People, Planet, & Profit

# March 5<sup>th</sup>

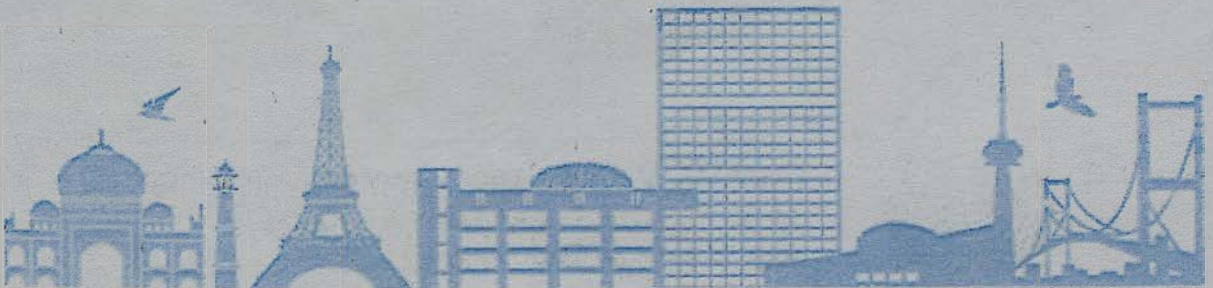
## Day 1

- 8:45–8:55: Security Announcement
- 8:55–9:00: Executive Committee Opening Remarks
- 9:00–9:05: Executive Director Opening Remarks  
*Ms. Jane Camblin, UNIS Executive Director*
- 9:05–9:15: Secretary-General Opening Remarks  
*H.E. Mr. Ban Ki Moon*
- 9:20–9:55: Ms. Amina Mohammed  
*Special Advisor on Post-2015 Development Planning*
- 9:55 – 10:10 Q&A Session
- 10:15 – 10:50 Mr. Georg Kell  
*Executive Director, UN Global Compact*
- 11:05–12:35: Lunch Break
- 12:35–12:45: Security Announcement
- 12:45–1:45: Open Dialogue *Corporate Social Responsibility*
- 1:45–2:20: Ms. Jennifer Siebel Newsom  
*CEO, Filmmaker, Women's Rights Advocate*
- 2:20–2:35: Q&A Session
- 2:35–2:40: Closing Remarks



# March 6<sup>th</sup> Day 2

- 8:45-8:55: Security Announcement
- 9:00-9:05: Executive Committee Opening Remarks
- 9:05-9:40: Mr. Hans Rosling  
*Co-Founder & Chairman, Gapminder Foundation*
- 9:40-9:55: Q&A Session
- 9:55-10:30: Mr. Joel K. Bourne  
*Journalist and Writer, National Geographic*
- 10:30-10:45: Q&A Session
- 10:45-10:55: Video Message
- 11:10-12:35: Lunch Break
- 12:45-12:50: Security Announcement
- 12:50-1:50: Open Dialogue *XL Keystone Pipeline*
- 1:50-2:25: Ms. Estela Vazquez  
*Executive Vice President, 1199 SEIU HealthCare Union*
- 2:25-2:40: Q&A Session
- 2:40-2:45: Closing Remarks



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A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MR. MICHAEL ADLERSTEIN, MRS. SYLVIA FUHRMAN, MR. PETER SMITH, AND THE UNIS BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THEIR INVALUABLE SUPPORT

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED AT THE UNIS-UN CONFERENCE ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF UNIS, THE UNITED NATIONS, OR THEIR AFFILIATE SUPPORT.



**UNIS-UN: United Nations International School**  
 24-50 FDR Drive, New York, NY 10010  
<http://www.unis-un.org>

# The 39<sup>TH</sup> Annual

UNIS-UN STUDENT CONFERENCE WORKING PAPER  
SUSTAINABILITY | BALANCING PEOPLE, PLANET, & PROFIT



# A Letter from the Co-Chairs:

Dear Participant,

We'd just like to take this moment to thank you for coming to this year's conference, and to reintroduce ourselves and the rest of the UNIS-UN organizing and executive committees. Ms. Sylvia Gordon founded UNIS-UN in 1976 at the United Nations International School. She wanted to create event in which her students and visiting students could meet to discuss pertinent world issues. Over the years, UNIS-UN has evolved into the largest student-run conference held in the United Nations General Assembly, with over 500 students attending from 5 continents.

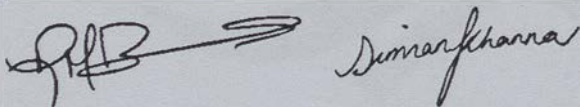
Every year we begin planning in April by interviewing and selecting the Executive Committee. This is the core planning body for the conference. We are divided into 6 commissions: Editing Commission; Public Relations, Finance, and Logistics (PFL) Commission; Ushering Commission; Visiting Schools Commission; Speakers Commission; and Technology Commission. Together we work with the over 100 UNIS students who make up the Organizing Committee to plan all aspects of the conference, from website design to social media presence to speaker and participant invitations and more.

We've worked hard to plan a marvelous experience for you, and we are so excited to welcome you to our city.

Here's to a Wonderful Conference!

Sincerely,

Ruth Bamuwanye and Simran Khanna

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is stylized and appears to be 'Ruth Bamuwanye'. The signature on the right is written in a cursive script and clearly reads 'Simran Khanna'.

UNIS-UN Executive Committee Co-Chairs

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# Foreword

Sustainability is a prevalent issue facing people globally. As citizens of the Earth, we have a moral duty to conserve and sustain our planet. Three prominent aspects of sustainability are preserving people, planet, and profit. In an ever advancing world, the question as to how we, as a population will be able to sustain this forward momentum without affecting aspects like our environment and our overall well-being arises. This year's conference topic, "Sustainability: Balancing People, Planet, and Profit" examines the various ways in which we can address and evaluate the three main aspects of sustainability.

As the youth of tomorrow, it is absolutely necessary for us to hold an international, inclusive conference, as it is important for us to explore sustainability and its affect our lives now and in the future. We must consider and discuss all of its aspects so that we may serve our rapidly evolving global landscape. This working paper will proceed to question, analyze and investigate these aspects of sustainability. We want you, as students of international backgrounds to question and evaluate the way you go about your daily lives. The purpose of the working paper is for you to see these issues through the eyes of other students. Hopefully, it will supply you with background knowledge and act as a supplement, which will work to enrich your experience during the conference. Issues like the Keystone XL pipeline as well as the role of corporations in society will be incorporated and debated.

As a group of diverse and intellectual students, we should improve our overall understanding of the world surrounding us. We want to encourage discussion and debate throughout the conference. Please do not hesitate to question the speakers (when appropriate) and participate in the debates that will take place. We must all engage in conversation about a sustainable society because we live in a time of great change and it is very crucial that we hold these discussions for our future.

# Rules

## Code of Conduct

1. All students must arrive at the United Nations at 8:00 A.M. to ensure that there is enough time to go through security.
2. As a representative of UNIS-UN, please act in a respectful manner in order to preserve the integrity of the organization (e.g. do not chew gum during the conference).
3. Students may not bring laptops or large bags such as backpacks to the conference.
4. Cell phones and other portable electronic devices should be turned off, and their use is not permitted during the conference.
5. Students are prohibited from bringing food and/or drinks to the conference.
6. Students must sit in their assigned seat.
7. Follow all instructions given by ushers and advisors.
8. Any students who are found to be acting in violation of these guidelines may be removed from the conference, and will face disciplinary consequences.

## Dress Code

1. The dress code for the conference is business attire. The image of UNIS-UN is reflected in our appearance, and all students must make sure to dress appropriately.
2. As a general guideline, students cannot wear jeans, sneakers, hats, baggy or ripped clothing, sweatpants or other athletic apparel, revealing clothing, low cut or short dresses. While high heels are allowed, they are not recommended.
3. Students wearing any of the aforementioned items will be sent out, and not be allowed to attend the conference.
4. Girls should wear knee length skirts or dresses, or dress pants. Leggings OPAQUE are acceptable when accompanied by a loose LONG dress shirt that provides ample coverage. It is recommended for a tank top to be worn under sheer shirts.
5. Boys should wear either a suit, or dress pants with a RECOMMENDED jacket, as well as a collared shirt, tie, and dress shoes.

## Speaker Bios

**Amina J. Mohammed** was born in 1961, in Nigeria. She was appointed in July 2012 by the UN Secretary-General as Special Adviser on Post-2015 Development Planning. Ms. Mohammed has



more than 30 years experience as a development practitioner in the public and private sectors, as well as civil society. Prior to her UN role, she served as Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on the MDGs, serving three Presidents over a period of six years. Ms. Mohammed has served on numerous international advisory panels and boards. She is a recipient of the Nigerian 'National Honours Award of the Order of the Federal Republic' and was inducted in the Nigerian Women's Hall of Fame in 2007. Ms. Mohammed has four children.



**Georg Kell** is the Executive Director of the UN Global Compact, the world's largest voluntary corporate sustainability initiative, with 8,000 corporate participants in 145 countries. A key architect of the Global Compact, he has led the initiative since its founding in 2000, establishing the most widely recognized multi-stakeholder network and action platform to advance responsible business practices. Mr. Kell also oversaw the conception and launch of the Global Compact's sister

initiatives on investment and business education, the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) and the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME).

Mr. Kell started his career as a research fellow in engineering at the renowned Fraunhofer Institute for Production Technology and Innovation in Berlin. He then worked as a financial analyst in various countries in Africa and Asia. He joined the United Nations in 1987, and has been at the leading edge of the organization's private-sector engagement ever since. A native of Germany, Mr. Kell holds advanced degrees in economics and engineering from the Technical University Berlin.



**Jennifer Siebel Newsom** is a CEO, filmmaker, advocate, and thought leader. After graduating with honors from Stanford University and Stanford's Graduate School of Business, Newsom wrote, directed, and produced the 2011 award-winning documentary *Miss Representation*.

As a result of *Miss Representation's* powerful impact, Newsom launched The Representation Project, a non-profit organization established to awaken society's consciousness, inspire individual and community action and ultimately, transform culture. Newsom's second film, *The Mask You Live In*, which debuts in 2015, explores America's narrow definition of masculinity of boys and men.

Newsom produced the Academy Award-Nominated documentary *The Invisible War* and *The Hunting Ground*. She is currently producing her third film, *The Great American Lie*. When she is not running The Representation Project and making documentaries,

Newsom serves as a Global Advisory Board member of the Dove Self Esteem Project, a co-chair of We Day California, and a commissioner on the Girl Scouts' Healthy Media Commission. Miss Newsom resides in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, California Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, and their three young children.

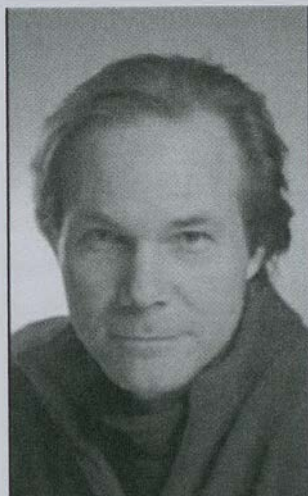


**Hans Rosling** is the Professor of International Health at the Karolinska Institute, the medical university in Stockholm, Sweden. and co-founder and chairman of the Gapminder Foundation, with his son and daughter in-law.

Gapminder promotes a fact-based worldview by converting the international statistics into moving, interactive, understandable, and enjoyable graphics. This was first done by developing the Trendalyzer software that Google acquired in 2007. Using animations of global trends, Hans Rosling lectures about past and contemporary economic, social and environmental changes in the world. Rosling's presentations are grounded in solid statistics (often drawn from United Nations data). The animations transform development statistics into moving bubbles and flowing curves that make global trends clear. His award-winning lectures on global trends have been labeled "humorous, yet deadly serious" and many in the audience realize their own worldview is lagging by many decades.

His 20 years of research on global health concerned the character of the links between economy and health in Africa, Asia and Latin America. He has been adviser to WHO and UNICEF, co-founded Médecines sans Frontiers in Sweden and started new courses and published a textbook on Global Health.

**Joel Bourne** is an award-winning journalist and contributing writer for National Geographic. A former Senior Editor for the Environment, he has covered major environmental issues for the



magazine, including the global food crisis of 2008, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and California's recurrent water woes. With a degree in agronomy, Bourne frequently reports on the global food system. Most recently he contributed two articles to National Geographic's ground-breaking eight-part series, "The Future of Food," reporting on the agricultural land rush in Africa, as well as new sustainable methods of aquaculture being practiced around the world. His first book, *The End of Plenty: the Race to Feed a Crowded*

*World*, will be published by W.W. Norton in the spring of 2015.

Bourne has appeared on numerous television and radio programs, including CNN's *American Morning*, CNN International, the National Geographic Channel, and the Diane Rehm Show. Prior to his tenure at National Geographic, Bourne's work appeared in *National Geographic Adventure*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Audubon*, *Science*, *Outside*, and many other publications. He lives with his wife and three children in Wilmington, North Carolina. Estela Vazquez is Executive Vice President of 1199 SEIU, the largest healthcare union and union local in the country. Ms. Vazquez diligently represents the 15,000 hospital workers at Montefiore, Beth Israel and St. Luke's-Roosevelt Medical Centers in New York, among other institutions.

A native of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Ms. Vazquez became politically active in 1961 as a junior high school student, joining demonstrations to demand the removal from government of the family and supporters of the brutal dictator Rafael Trujillo, who had been in power for 31 years. Through her life, Ms. Vazquez made it her mission to fight for social and economic justice. In the late 1960s, she became active in the movement against the Vietnam War, and with African-American and Latino community movements like the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords. In the 1970s, she joined the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and was a founding member in 1984 of Latinos for Jesse Jackson.

# Grab a Snack After the Conference!

(Restaurants arranged in order of furthest to nearest from the UN)

Pershing Square 90 East 42nd Street, New York \$\$

The Capital Grille 155 E 42nd St New York, NY 10017 \$\$\$

Sakagura 211 East 43rd Street \$\$

Cafe Un Deux Trois 123 W 44th St New York, NY 10036 \$

Alcala Restaurant 246 E 44th St New York, NY 10017 \$\$\$

Keats Restaurant Traditional American, 842 2nd Ave (between 44th and 45th) \$\$

Gente Ristorante Italiano Italian, 153 East 45th Street, New York \$\$

Shih Lee Good Eats Chinese, 311 45th St (between 2nd and 1st) \$

99 Miles to Philly Sandwiches, 300 45th St (between 2nd and 1st) \$

Super Dumpling Chinese, 251 45th St (between 3rd and 2nd) \$

Jimmy's Spot Middle Eastern, 226 47th St (between 3rd and 2nd) \$

Ali Baba's Terrace Turkish/Mediterranean, 862 2nd Ave (between 46th and 47th) \$\$

Elite Food Bar Sandwiches, 325 48th St (between 2nd and 1st) \$

Goodburger Burgers, 800 2nd Ave \$\$

- 📍 United Nations Headquarters
- 📍 Sakagura
- 📍 The Capital Grille
- 📍 Alcala Restaurant
- 📍 Keats Restaurant
- 📍 Gente Ristorante Italiano
- 📍 Shih Lee Chinese Eatery
- 📍 99 Miles to Philly
- 📍 Super Dumpling
- 📍 Ali Baba's Terrace
- 📍 Elite Food Bar
- 📍 Goodburger



## People : Our Voice

The American Oxford Dictionary defines sustainability as the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level as well as to conserve an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources. Most of society recognizes the idea of sustainability as an isolated issue, far from the concern of present well being despite the facts that the effects of our changing environment are no longer invisible. Nonetheless, many of us often choose to ignore the facts and the solutions that are presented, either because we do not like the sacrifices that we are asked to make or because we feel as though the major effects of unsustainability will not be seen in our lifetime. Sustainability is also defined as 'able to be maintained at a certain rate or level'. We cannot possibly expect to live in a sustainable environment, as there are currently 759 million illiterate adults and 72 million children of primary age who are not in school.

There are several definitions of a sustainable society. From what I have gathered a sustainable society is one that ensures a healthy, prosperous life culture and Nation's capital for future generations. It is a society, which actively promotes, human, environmental and economic well-being, one that works to stop human destruction of the environment, natural resources, and culture. Our economies are interconnected, and our societies all strive for one purpose: to survive. In an effort to survive, we have gradually destroyed our environment. It is crucial that we address the consequences now. If we continue to let over 3 billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day and 1.3 billion on \$1.25 a day, then we will not achieve sustainability. The first step to seeking balance is allowing people basic necessities: food and clean drinking water are fundamental to live, and without which there is no sustainability.

The UN and other NGOs work to supply children with clean drinking water and food, and help teach adults to read and write. Member states of the United Nations have already signed off on the Sustainable Development Goals, in conjunction with the Millennium Development Goals, to acknowledge new developments in complete sustainability between all aspects of

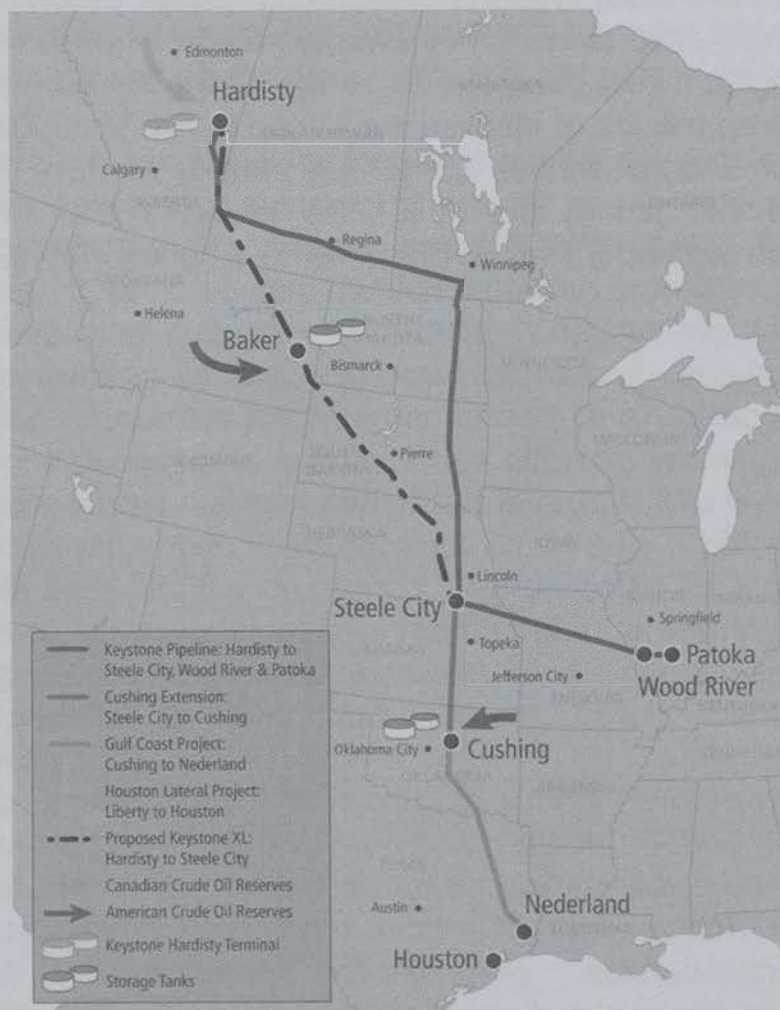
life. There are eight Millennium Development Goals, which include eradicating poverty, achieving universal primary education, ensuring environmental sustainability as well as several others. Although not all of the UN member states were able to reach their original goal of 2015 (many did), there are continuing efforts made by countries all over the world to help those in poverty, a Global Launch of Action made by the UN and many other encouraging studies and reports. Sustainable development can be achieved, starting with solar and wind energy, crop rotation, efficient water fixtures, and green space. Solar and wind energy would replace the costs and damages of a non-renewable energy grid power system.

There are skeptics regarding the impact of sustainability on society and the economy. They believe that overpopulation will continue to drain natural resources long before we can successfully save them. There are also those who do not believe the changing climate and are not aware of the extreme conditions under which billions of families are forced to live. It is possible that corruption and selfishness will ruin the chance we have to become a sustainable world, but it is also possible that unwavering dedication and optimism will lead us to a functional, sustainable future.

## Can the Keystone XL Pipeline Project Be Considered Both Positive and Negative Depending on the Point of View?

### Background Information:

- Runs from Alberta, Canada to Cushing Oklahoma
- Key Stone Pipeline XL 1,700 miles
- Could contribute to global warming/pollute water sources
- It would double imports of tar sands oils into US and transport for international export
- With tar sands oil production levels of carbon dioxide emissions are 3-4 times the amount with conventional oil



## Pros

- Business corporations have a social responsibility requiring them to use some of their resources to address needs within their communities, as their goal should extend beyond profit to employees, consumers and others
- Competitive immunity is created, making a business more sustainable in the long run
- Capitalism is evolving with society, thus if they become socially responsible, they are likely to be more successful
- A corporate giving program can improve name recognition and boost reputation among consumers
- Positive consumer sentiment can increase sales
- Certain problems affecting the planet like climate change also concern corporations
- Corporations should be both “authentic” and “transparent”
- It will reduce government regulation if businesses will have self-disciplined standards meeting societal welfare
- Businesses should have a

## Cons

- The principal responsibility of business corporations is to shareholders and it is a responsibility to conduct the operations of the company in such a way to maximize the wealth of the shareholders
- Business corporations serve their society best by increasing their profitability
- No warrant to use assets for charitable purposes- “illicit tax” on shareholders as their money is being used for public purposes
- The ultimate goal of corporations is to maximize profits, not enhance social welfare
- If the free market cannot solve social problems, it is not the problem of corporations but of the government and legislation
- Managers are oriented towards finance and operations and do not necessarily have the social skills required for making socially oriented decisions
- Corporations already have a lot of power and placing social welfare in their hands is just increasing this power
- Businesses will become less competitive globally

|  |   |
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| <p>hand at trying to improve social welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is better for businesses to anticipate the impact of their decisions rather than react and rectify them later on</li> <li>• Foreign investment treaties and other negotiations that give corporations the ability to expand into poorer countries at the expense of local businesses exist</li> <li>• Corporate activities introducing new technologies sometimes lead to the technology is owned by the company itself so it retains the benefits for itself</li> <li>• In some countries, large corporations have funded media suppression and military activities against workers to retain profit</li> <li>• The state should give them with the appropriate environment to work</li> <li>• They cause different kinds of pollution through the release of debris and toxic wastes</li> <li>• They abuse employees by underpaying them and violate rights like right to housing and right to free movement</li> <li>• They can have unsafe working conditions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporations promote efficiency and the numerous concerns surrounding how they function serve as an impediment</li> <li>• Even though corporations may not pay their employees the best salary, they guarantee less risk of losing a job</li> <li>• Corporations function the way society does and are not meant to be good or bad for society, rather a reflection on society itself</li> <li>• Though corporations work on the profit motive, this should be accepted as they are working to provide the general public with materials they require</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

**Should corporations have a responsibility to the people and planet when their mission is to make profit?**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Pros</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will create thousands of jobs in a time of high unemployment in US</li><li>• Would be better for transportation: Now oil is being transported by train and previously, a train transporting oil crashed and lead to the destruction of a town</li><li>• Contribute to lowering prices of oil by increasing the levels of supply of crude oil</li><li>• Would contribute a significant amount to the American economy</li><li>• (Increase energy security) Would provide oil from a friendly ally (Canada) to the US, improving trade relations between them</li></ul> | <p>Cons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most of the jobs created would be temporary</li><li>• Indigenous people and farmers could be displaced</li><li>• Impacts on people's health in close proximity of the pipeline</li><li>• It takes a lot of energy to produce a barrel of tar sands oil</li><li>• Could contribute to global warming</li><li>• Could damage the environment if the pipe failed or an oil spill would cause contamination of fragile ecosystems (Ogalallah Aquifer, Sand Hills in Nebraska)</li><li>• Many argue that the use of money for more sustainable projects would create more jobs and be environmentally beneficial</li><li>• The pipeline would be bad for the economy because global warming would cause more changes in climate and weather leading to the US spending more money on clean up after disastrous events take place</li><li>• The project crossing an international border can have several implications.</li></ul> |
|---|---|

# Sustainability Quiz!

What is the most eco-friendly car (as of 2014)?

- a. Toyota Prius C
- b. Smart Fortwo Electric
- c. Honda Civic Natural Gas
- d. Lexus CT200h

How many aluminum cans are used every year?

- a. 80 million
- b. 8 billion
- c. 80 billion
- d. 80 trillion

How long does a glass bottle take to decompose?

- a. 8 years
- b. 4000 years
- c. 250 years
- d. 750 years

What country produces the most amount of trash per year?

- a. China
- b. India
- c. United States
- d. France

What percentage of plastic bags are recycled?

- a. 1%
- b. 40%
- c. 17%
- d. 9%

What percent of the Earth's surface is water?

- a. 30%
- b. 70%
- c. 85%
- d. 5%

How many plastic bags are produced each year?

- a. 400 billion

- b. 13 billion
- c. 720 million
- d. 8000

How many pounds of garbage does an average person dispose of daily?

- a. 9
- b. 14
- c. 7
- d. 3

How much of the average household's waste can be recycled?

- a. 84%
- b. 67%
- c. 100%
- d. 45%

How much less energy does a compact fluorescent light bulb use than a regular light bulb?

- a. 75%
- b. 25%
- c. 85%
- d. 35%

What percentage of power could wind power provide for the United States (within 10 years)?

- a. 7%
- b. 20%
- c. 15%
- d. 30%

Which of the following is not true?

- a. The human population has grown the same amount in the previous 30 years than in the last 4 million
- b. 1 in 4 mammals species is at the risk of extinction
- c. The amount of rainforest lost each year is equivalent to the size of England, Wales and Scotland combined
- d. By the end of the 21st century, the temperature on Earth will rise 12 degrees fahrenheit

Which of these species is not at a high risk for extinction?

- a. South China tiger
- b. Leatherback turtle
- c. Bowhead Whale
- d. Black Rhino

Where is the world's tallest tree located?

- a. California
- b. Brazil
- c. Indonesia
- d. Peru

How long does it take for a recycled newspaper to become a new newspaper?

- a. 3 days
- b. 1 week
- c. 1 month
- d. 2 months

What percentage of drinking water comes in plastic bottles?

- a. 25%
- b. 50%
- c. 15%
- d. 40%

Which of the following is not true?

- a. 1.6 billion people aren't exposed to electricity
- b. 2.5 billion people can't access proper sanitation
- c. 1.7 billion people don't have access to clean water
- d. 1 billion people go hungry every day

When is Earth Day?

- a. May 4th
- b. April 22nd
- c. June 17th
- d. October 23rd

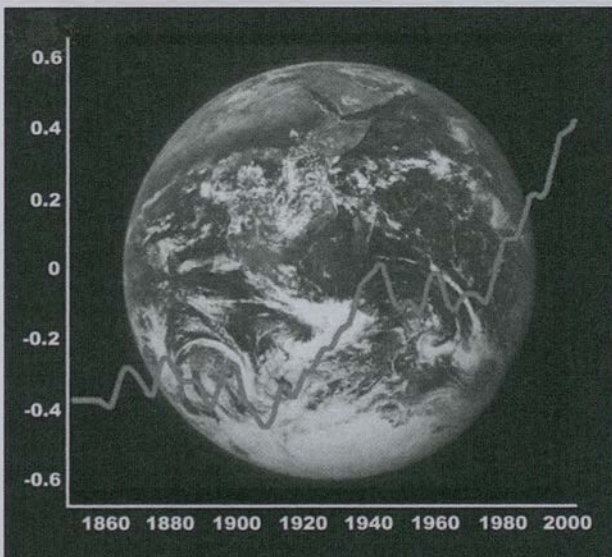
# Planet: A Changing Climate Could Threaten Our Way of Life

Arguably the greatest challenge, which we must confront over the coming years and decades, is climate change. The damage wrought by a warming atmosphere has already begun, and will continue, to affect all people of our planet regardless of the country or region in which they live.

The primary factor contributing to climate change is the amount of greenhouse gasses people are emitting. In particular, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) accounts for the majority of gas emissions; these emissions notably come from the combustion of fossil fuels to power cars, airplanes, as well as power plants. By increasing the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> entering the atmosphere so rapidly, humans are altering the carbon cycle and thereby allowing for more sunlight to remain trapped close to the surface of the Earth. As a result, the surface is heated by the excess sunlight, leading to melting glaciers and ice caps, in addition to an overall rise in sea levels and temperatures.

At the moment, the effects of climate change may not be so obvious. Nevertheless, the warning signs are clearly emerging. Over the past century, the global sea level has risen approximately 17cm. In addition, since 1980 the global average temperature has risen by close to 1°C. These changes are the repercussions of an increase in CO<sub>2</sub>

concentration in the atmosphere to around 400 parts per million. Recently, there were several studies and articles released stating that ocean life may face mass extinction in the near future as a result of climate change and human impact on the ocean. In a New York Times article dated on January 15, 2015 Ecologist Douglas J. McCauley stated that, "We may be sitting on a precipice



of a major extinction event.” Super-storms such as Hurricane Sandy in the Northeastern United States and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines have hinted not only at the potentially disastrous consequences of climate change, but also the growing likelihood of more frequent storms to come.

While it is impossible to predict with complete certainty the outcomes of climate change, the negatives effects are generally very foreseeable and urgent to avoid. For instance, as rising sea levels continue to damage vulnerable coastlines, and in extreme cases, drown small-inhabited islands; millions of people are likely to be displaced and become refugees. The global economy may also suffer from local disruptions to production of agricultural crops, and to the transportation and trade of commodities. While a desire to grow the economy is often cited in support of measures, which might harm the environment, it is questionable whether our current economic mechanisms could in fact sustain the changes wrought by a warming climate.

The effects of climate change could have a tremendous impact on the world and its inhabitants, especially if no steps are taken to limit human pollution and waste of resources. Even so, as U.S. President John F. Kennedy stated in 1963 of the nuclear weapons crisis, “Our problems are man-made – therefore, they can be solved by man.” This belief is crucial for us to truly understand the impact of climate change, and to work cooperatively to ensure the survival, safety, and well being of the human race.



# **“You Can’t Be What You Can’t See”**

## **- Marian Wright Edelman**

Written and produced by critically acclaimed director Jennifer Siebel Newsom, *Miss Representation* is a documentary that explores the under-representation of women in positions of power in the United States of America. It questions the true purpose of the media in modern day society and its intended message for today’s youth, in particular young women or girls. I was quite shocked to see how it so often does not matter what the woman is able to achieve, her value still revolves around her physicality. The United Nations International School is a place in which all students are strongly encouraged to embody leadership roles in the classroom, amongst peers and at home. Therefore, this documentary was rather alarming as I am not accustomed to the demeanor to which many women are exposed to daily.



Upon watching this film, I noticed a prevalent fact: media does, in fact act as ‘the message and the messenger.’ By the age of 13, 53% of girls are unhappy with their bodies. That number increases to 78% when girls reach the age of 17. These young women and girls are convinced that they must mimic media’s portrayal of beauty an image simply impossible to achieve because the technology used in every fashion magazine is far too advanced. The ideal image of beauty requires extreme digital alteration. If we continue to depict women in such a way we cannot expect girls above the age of thirteen to aspire to be leaders, as they will continue to wonder why they do not look like fashion models despite their choice to skip lunch three times a week. These images, whether for advertisements or news articles, imply that the way to become someone of importance is through

beauty. The American Psychological Association deemed self-objectification as a national epidemic; clearly this is no longer a minute issue. This issue is not only relevant to American women. The media portrays women in such a way all over the world. If one were to compare Vogue magazines covers from all over the world she would find a similar pattern with women of different nationalities. Women all over the world suffer with this issue; in many countries they are fighting to voice their opinions.

Women who seek to demonstrate or obtain an authoritative role are so often as not looked down upon. This is relevant to both television and politics. When women are protagonists in a film (16% of films) they are looking to fall in love with a man or



struggling with a relationship. When the actress has a leadership role they are portrayed as bossy, rude and careless. So why would any woman want to have a leadership role if she knows that she has to be cruel in order to obtain it? Jane Fonda explained that women over the age of 40 (in film) are not represented well in film and are told they need to look younger; women have always been treated this way, now however, the circumstances are more extreme. The author of *The Lolita Effect* and Associate Professor of Journalism at the University of Iowa, M. Gigi Durham, said, “You don’t need your sexuality to attain power in the world.” This is a message that must be advocated to young women everywhere. We must teach women all over the world that power and respect should be obtained through the words that are spoken not length of the skirt.

# Word Search

S D S M C O R K A E T G M P C L R A X A D I E W S F V B A G  
J U W E N D R N C F K A W A M O L A M S R N X E K K D U S D  
J D S V S K S O X P N Q S R T O J R C T B V G P X N T S X Q  
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M W G T A Y G S E W P L K E Z O N O Y R I W W P Y H J E H B  
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J M H T Y F N P S F L B E I Z G O N O H N N W P F D J J O D  
U M E Z Q M D A G U O T I L L F D A Y B A G O J W S J M M V  
B M H K K P A M B U O N A A J T A C V N V W F S K U T S M G  
N N J X A R F A K I D H C H Y P E R S E X U A L I Z E O O U  
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K M P L W O C S A W H Y X P C E Z M A I Z B R T C V J N S H  
H A I Y I C O I K I U C I X O A C K Z S H R X W N L S O K T  
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E E O X L B G I J G W O K P V B F B L R A P I F S B Y I Y I  
Y S Y W A R O Y L V A B F X W W M Y A I C R E V M P V C G I  
J C F A H V U D K D C R Q E K R Z B N E A I L R V F S A R O  
Q W P D M Y Q G Q D H A U P W V L J O T Q E M M S C C C E C  
K F G P F U Q H A I K C Z A Z S Q V I U Y G E E F T F W N E  
Z B H K Z H H S O H X W E O G T X L T E F A T S D Y O S E A  
N N C U X X Y R C W S B B W D V A A A O I U X S V I B R C I  
O H D G W A T M O S P H E R E G M X N P L E Z Y T H P U M G  
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Y D G Z A Z W F N I T X N J V O U I T G O R Z C Y F Q S O F

AGRICULTURE \* ATMOSPHERE \* CARBONCYCLE \*  
COMMODITY \* ECOSYSTEM EGALITARIAN \* ENERGY \*  
ENTREPRENEUR \* EPIDEMIC \* FEUDALISM  
GREENHOUSEGASES \* HYPERSEXUALIZE \* INDUSTRIALIZE  
NATIONALIZATION SOCIOECONOMIC \* SOCIOPOLITICAL \*  
SUPERSTORM SUSTAINABILITY \* UTOPIA

## **Profit: Same Concern**

Man has become a creature largely focused on its own self-interest, living a life in the pursuit of self-gain -- the quest for profit. This individualistic quest to seek financial and socio-political gains only for oneself and one's close relations is deep-rooted in the majority of industrialized modern societies, and this will to power impacts people to people interactions as well as simultaneously changing the planet. This competitive self-interest manifests itself in examples such as the current system of college applications, workplace politics, and countless other interactions of daily life. While many examples of historical pursuits of profit and countless resource wars may make it seem that the task of advancing oneself economically is bound to destabilize relations between different people as well as negatively impact the planet; there are several different political models with different approaches as how to sustain the quest for profit while respecting the planet and the people who live on it.

The current socio-economic model in place in the majority of the developed world is capitalism, a system in which a country's means of production, distribution of product, and industry are controlled by private owners and corporations for profit. Capitalism has been the dominant economic system of the world since the abolishment of medieval serfdom, and is compatible with democracy in theory and in practice. The main tenets of capitalism include wage labor, a contract in which a worker sells his/her labor to an employer, competition, a rivalry among sellers trying to achieve the highest profit through influence trade and industry, and private ownership. Unfortunately, capitalism has been criticized as its key tenets are arguably individualistic in nature, and therefore ultimately supports distrust between different private owners who compete to profit from another owner's loss. Unsustainable capitalism has led to economic crises such as the recent financial crisis of 2007, caused by many factors such as faulty loaning, poor regulation, and the bursting of the U.S. real estate bubble, which had severe repercussions throughout the developed world. Capitalism encompasses a large variety of different forms, two of the more prominent forms being *laissez-faire* and state capitalism.

Laissez-faire, translated as “let them do” in French, is a form of capitalism in which industry and trade are ideally completely independent from government and are fully controlled by private owners and entrepreneurs. This model has been extensively written about throughout history by writers such as Adam Smith and Ayn Rand, and generally gives freedom to private citizens to engage in whatever transactions they want to without taxation or interference from a third party. Unfortunately, while laissez-faire appeals to individuals who pursue Horatio Alger-like “rags to riches” aspirations, this socio-economic model does not account for either the environment or the welfare of others as this individualism implies that endorsers of this model should only look out for their own interests for the sake of profit. Nations that endorse this are for instance the United States of America, which has consistently been disposing of large quantities of unnecessarily waste which greatly damages the environment, and has embroiled itself in unnecessary wars in the Middle East such as the Gulf War in order to protect its oil interests abroad.

State capitalism is an economic system in which means of production, distribution of product, and industry are controlled by the government. This model is the polar opposite of laissez-faire capitalism, due to the intrusion of the state in the transactions of corporations and individuals. China is a prominent example of a nation, which has used state capitalism to thrive; its nationalization of industry has led to it becoming one of the world’s economic superpowers. In terms of sustainability, state capitalism is much more viable in the long run than laissez-faire as there is a definitive power that oversees all economics that can assess and affect the impact it has on the planet and all of its people.

In the same way that capitalism superseded the feudalism that came before it, a philosopher by the name of Karl Marx envisioned that capitalism would inevitably be replaced by socialism, which would then be followed by communism. Both of these socio-political models fall under the general worldview of Marxism, a perspective that in theory aims to ultimately establish an egalitarian utopia in which the means of production, distribution of product, and industry are communally owned by all people. The main tenets of Marxism include the abolishment of private property, the abolishment of wage labor (called wage slavery by

Marxists), and a proliferation of social services such as education and healthcare. Unfortunately, the aforementioned capitalists who question the feasibility of establishing a state that embodies pure Marxist values, and also state that while Marxism is compatible with democracy in theory, past so-called “communists” have actually been oppressive dictatorships have criticized Marxism.

Socialism is described by Marx as being the next step of socio-economic evolution after capitalism, and is a system in which the means of production, distribution, and industry of a nation are communally controlled publically. As a consequence of this, money and social classes will eventually disappear from society and all the contributing workers will profit from this harmony “according to his contribution.” Communism is simply socialism a step further, a ungoverned utopia where all people benefit “according to his need,” yet it has never truly been implemented. Nations such as Cuba and Sweden have already taken the first steps towards total socialism through their policies on welfare and other social services, and boast high literacy rates and stellar healthcare for their citizens. Though many people consider the United States to be strictly capitalist, the system of welfare and social security established by Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the New Deal has clear influences from socialism. Socialist minded states tend to pursue renewable energy and other sustainable projects that do not negatively affect the environment, and currently seems to be the best model that can sustainably support people and planet without emphasizing the need for profit.

Ultimately, while the average human being tends to be motivated by its own self interest with a minimal amount of consideration to how its actions affect other people and the planet overall, various socio-economic models offer other systems for humans to use in order to sustain humanity’s place on this planet. Profit by itself is a very individualistic concept that causes people to compete with each other to procure the limited amount of resources that Earth has to offer, and can be overcome in order to possibly end the negative effects of economic hostility for good.

## Afterword

In the coming years, we will see an increasing need for sustainable societies as our world is advancing at a rapid pace. If we fail to acknowledge what we are told by renowned experts we will find ourselves in a very difficult and dangerous situation. We currently live in a population of just over 7 billion people, and these numbers are steadily rising. For us to adapt to this new situation, it is essential we find a balance between the various aspects of sustainability that we have explored over the course of this conference. It is our generation's task to create an environment where people can coexist and thrive through a prosperous economy and stable living standard that benefits all. We cannot continue to let society neglect the effects of climate change, and forget that more than 1.8 billion people live in extreme poverty. Lastly, we must search for a way to balance the 'quest' for profit while maintaining respect for the planet and people.



# Glossary

## Agriculture

The process, science, and study of farming

[Oxford Dictionary]

## Atmosphere

Gaseous “pocket” that surrounds Earth or other planets

[Oxford Dictionary]

## Carbon Cycle

CO<sub>2</sub> is created by organisms that undergo photosynthesis in order produce organic nutrients, and eventually restored to an inorganic state

[Merriam Webster, check with a bio person though, I believe their definition is lacking some key concepts]

## Commodity

1) A good of commerce

2) Something of value

[dictionary.reference.com]

## Ecosystem

Relations between organisms and nonliving environment that work as an unit [biology-online.org]

## Egalitarian

Belief in the equality of humans, especially in political social and economic matters

[Merriam Webster]

## Energy

Power that comes from using resources, most usually for heating, lighting , or powering machines; this can be derived from wind, solar, chemical, geothermal , bioenergy, wood, oil, natural gas, coal

[www.portal.state.pa. And Oxford Dictionary]

## Entrepreneur

One who runs and is responsible for organizing businesses and differs from the norm by taking larger financial risks to accomplish the aforementioned responsibilities

[Oxford Dictionary]

## Epidemic

1) Having an effect which impacts a large number of people

within region

2) Indicated by its large-scale growth

[Merriam Webster]

Feudalism

A political system in medieval Europe, where a lord owned land and vassals and serfs used it for farmland

Greenhouse Gases

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, such as methane, carbon dioxide, fluorinated gases, nitrous oxide; these gases in turn, through the greenhouse effect, cause climate change based upon their concentration in the atmosphere

[<http://www.epa.gov>]

Hyper sexualize

To give excessive sexual characteristics, especially prevalent in media and commercials

Industrialize

To develop a region's industries or to create industries [Oxford Dictionary]

Nationalization

To transfer a division of industry to state control from private control

Socio-economic

Pertaining to a mix of economic and social factors

Socio-political

Pertaining to a mix of political and social factors

Super storm

A very large, severe storm denoted via unprecedented meteorological occurrences and extensive damage

[[dictionary.reference.com](http://dictionary.reference.com)]

Sustainability

Method of harvesting a resource in such a manner that said resource does not run out or significantly damaged

[Merriam Webster]

Utopia

An ideal state or place, also defined via the ambitious/impractical system of social and/or political excellence [Merriam Webster and [dictionary.reference.com](http://dictionary.reference.com)]

# Answer Keys

Facts Quiz:

Word Search

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| H | Z | J | V | B | A | Q | Y | F | O | A | N | X | O | E | V | T | G | T | G | G | R | D | Y | D |   |   |   |   |
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| Q | W | P | D | M | Y | Q | G | Q | D | H | U | P | W | V | L | J | Q | E | M | C | C | C | C |   |   |   |   |   |
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| Y | D | G | Z | A | Z | W | F | N | I | T | X | N | J | V | O | I | T | G | O | R | Z | C | Y | F | Q | S | O | F |

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Images taken from Britannica Image Quest

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