



# Balancing Friendships between Man and Nature

*A Message from GWI President to Reflect on during Christmas Time*



## Valerie Ndaruzaniye





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# Balancing Friendships between Man and Nature

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Life appeared on Earth almost as soon as conditions allowed. *Nature* was so beautifully set that only *Man* could live in harmony with it. The center of human existence takes its roots in *Nature*. The harmony in the natural environment requires that some living species *act against* and others *act with* the environment in ways to render it both more sustainable and less threatening. While animals and plants do it reasonably, humans have taken a step further. *Man* invented machines which, today, dry up seas of oil and rare minerals in poor countries, leaving behind conflict and ashes, a type of soil that cannot grow crops any longer. This is what scares some of us.

Although gradual action has always been constant with an inescapable necessity, too much of wanting can be the source a sharp loss. Like a lion in the nature, *Man* should keep the friendship balance between him and *Nature*. He should take what he needs for surviving and let go the rest, so that others can get their fair share of the pie. A deep gap between the rich and the poor is dangerous and undeniably leads to disasters, competition, environmental insecurity, conflict and migration,

The scary issue is not the deepening gap between the rich and the poor that is causing migration today. Rather, it is predators leaving *Nature* emptied of its water and fertile soil. Water and food insecurity, and starvation are at hand today. Without food and water, *Man* moves to somewhere else and no one can stop him. Without these two elements, the relationship between *Man* and *Nature* is lost. The following questions beg for answers.

1. How does *Man* cope with his relationship to *Nature*?
2. Is this contemporary era different from the past?
3. Is *Man* doing more damages to *Nature* than he did not millions of years ago?
4. What role do humans assign to their natural environment?

5. Is there any time in life when *Man* was not besieged by natural events such as: earthquakes, storm-rain, wind, floods, fire, cold, famine, pests and predators?
6. Is it true that life can disappear on Earth almost as soon as *Man* decides?
7. Is *Man* comfortable with typhoons, tsunamis or any types of environmental shift out of *Man's* control?
8. When does *Man* stop deciding for *Nature* so that their mutual friendship can keep its harmony?
9. How far can *Man* evolve with greed in mind?

*Man* has unmeasurably multiplied himself and *Nature* did not. A cleverer *Man* would suspect what may be the revenge from *Nature*. The why questions by *Nature* are then as follows:

10. Why did *Man* disturb harmony by multiplying self too much to the point of creating imbalance? And why does *Man* need more on his plate than is necessary? The answer is quite obvious: personal pleasure, insatiability, Power. On one side, *Nature* has to respond with anger, through Tsunamis, floods, droughts among others. On the other side, *Man* loses his mind and chooses weapons or bulldozers to fight against *Nature* or inoffensive people and wild animals.
11. Where on earth is this happening, and in which regions?
12. Is rebalancing *Man* and *Nature* the right thing to do to re-create the harmony between the two, so that environmental sustainability can be ensured?
13. How is the deepening gap between the rich and the poor calculated?
14. Should *Man* in Power hand over local lands to foreigners without a say from local communities to whom the nature belong? Local goods are being traded on unprecedented scale. 30 percent of Liberian land has just been sold out to foreigners in less than five years.
15. Does democratic governance have its place in human sustainable development?

### Economic Growth and Inequality

Growth in global GDP rose by 75% since 1992, but did not stop inequality from deepening

**A Glimpse of Hope** does not mean developed countries should continue developing devices that are detriment to the environment.

To show inequality gap, the United Nations (UN) use measures such as, Global and regional GDP growths between countries. Low-income, middle-income and high-income countries are all compared in GDP's growth term. For instance, between 1992 to 2010, the world's overall GDP grew by 75 percent and GDP per capita by 40 percent. Using per capita measures, middle-income countries observed the fastest growth in the 2000s. Surprisingly, low-income countries came next and were followed by high-income countries.

In the course of *Man's* evolution, one can observe a shift from a preponderant fear that human existence is capable of overwhelming and destroying *Nature*. The following countries are cases in point:

- The natural storehouse of the amazing richness of minerals of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is being overexploited by strangers to oblivion in the face of helpless local communities who do not get any profits from their own *Nature*, but on the contrary, see their entrenched poverty becomes deepened to a more worrying degree.
- The Amazon rain forest with its genetic lumber room of incredible wealth may just be bulldozed to its extinction as if nothing essential from this *Nature* is vital to *Man's* survival.
- With their supposedly great idea to grow cotton in the desert, the former Soviet Union did not think twice when they diverted the Ama Dariya and the Syrdariya, the two rivers which fed the Aral Sea. Today they can only be proud of their own creation that is a disastrous ecological tragedy causing the extinction of Aral Sea, a *Nature* on which many people depended for their survivals.
- Five years ago, the United Nations Environment Programme –UNEP reported how palm-oil plantations were the leading cause of deforestation in both Malaysia and Indonesia. Aggressive plantations in both countries were highly criticized as they were said to be removing a vital carbon sink, which is a devastation to the native habitat of orangutans and very dangerous to Sumatran tigers and rhinoceros.
- The Guinean forests extending from Sierra Leone to Nigeria and which once covered the entire Liberia, is now identified as one of the 25 most important biodiversity hot spots on the planet that is undeniably vulnerable, and therefore looking for protection.
- Similarly to industrial development, scalable agricultural endeavors, and all types of intensive plantings have far-reaching impacts on both water availability in sufficient quantity and quality and the use of pesticides and other agrochemical products involved in growing crops for food production. Adequate measures ought to be taken in advance to prevent serious damages to *Nature* and poor people.

16. How about if population growth was halved in developing countries, -by how far would they grow in terms of GDP per capita?



In countries like those in permanent conflict such as the DRC, Central African Republic, Nigeria, and South Sudan, strong economic growth could make dramatic improvements in the lives of many poor people as women would be available in workplaces instead of busying themselves with household chores. Public hospitals would be empty and funds used for public free medicine would be used for restoring *Nature*, child education, and/or innovation, for instance. One may estimate that gross national income per capita (based on purchasing power parity) in high-income countries would rise to about 15 times higher than low-income countries as opposed to 30 times as it was the case in 2010.

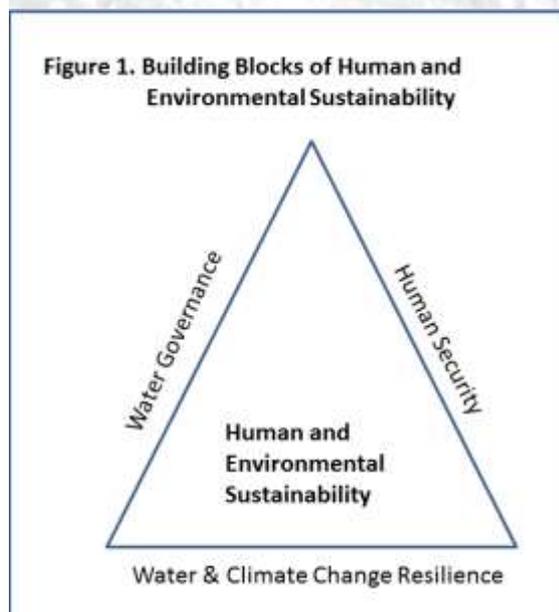
With a steady decrease in population growth, *Man* would be compromising with *Nature*. Even with a surge growth of middle class people, *Man* would still see a steep decrease in the level of income inequality, narrowing the gap between rich and poor. The narrower the gap, the more peaceful the world would be, so will economic prosperity, and the balance between *Man* and *Nature*.

Economic development must be viewed as a gradual strengthening of *Man's* cleverness to keep *Nature* at bay. *Man* should not fear *Nature* to the point of destroying it. The aforementioned natural disasters have instinctively scared human kinds to the point of, for the latter, to set child- soldiers as guards with weapons.

## Water Access and Human Security in Post conflict Countries

More than three decades have passed since a UN clear consensus emerged on key water management policy. Yet, such a policy neglected to acknowledge challenges faced by collapsed states, countries in post-conflict situations, and communities living in entrenched poverty without access to clean water, adequate sanitation and food. Re-balancing with *Nature* is key essential to the building blocks of human security and environmental sustainability, see figure below.

Protecting human security implies caring for *Nature*, so that *Man* can get what he needs from it, i.e. water, food, and fire; protecting them against conflicts and fostering democratic governance. Humans' resilience to climate change cannot be complete without these elements.



The mutually supporting relationship between *Man's* comfort (human security), water security (with effective governance), and climate change's resilience, should be in harmony if *Man* and *Nature* were keeping their natural balance.  $1+1 = 2$ . With  $1+2$  equaling 3, there is an imbalance. The one put in disequilibrium will use all means to set self comfortably. So far the Earth is equipped with more people than it should hold. This imbalance looks for an urgent remedy.

**Figure 2. Balancing Man and Nature**



17. Until when *Nature* can be sustainable, considering *Man* can neither stop wanting nor multiplying self?
18. With the world population growth that is putting pressures on the environment, from where global food supplies and energy resources will come?

Since *Man* has chosen to produce more than he needs, *Nature's* response has been: the changing climate with many unpredictable events for which *Man* will never be able to plan with accurate timing.

Climate change is not just an environmental issue. Rather, it is a sustainable development issue that needs to foster resilience policies by guaranteeing societal well-being and a State's stability despite the contemporary alarming situation in

frequency of natural disasters. Communities should be re-taught how to relate to their *Nature*. Investing in community knowledge on how to cope with Nature is therefore urgently needed.

## New Directions for the Protection of Future Generations

### *Environmental Sustainability: Life in major Cities*

Today most people live within or near large, medium or small cities. They thereby experience the physical environment in character on a daily basis. While cities affect populations, the latter makes an impact on environmental sustainability as well.

Environmental sustainability, described in a broader sense, relates to the capacity of *Nature* to support all the living species over the long term. If human beings are considered the most intelligent living creators, then efficiency must be considered. It means: keeping the right balance between *Man* and *Nature* in a way that human-kinds utilize what *Nature* offers to meet their needs at the least cost to *Nature*.

In the cultural theory, the relationship is known as societal metabolism. This is explained as an analogous to the metabolism of the human body at the source of the rate at which all living beings, in order to survive, must breathe (for their living heart), drink water (for survival), eat food (for energy), and excrete (for staying healthy).

States, be they, weak or strong must tailor their ambitions to their capabilities. In all cases, some tasks are inescapable. Good pro-environmental leaders do these tasks right by achieving basic fundamentals in terms of

- Investing in people and green infrastructure,
- Protecting the vulnerable, and
- Protecting the natural environment to ensure the balance between *Man* and *Nature*, i.e. ensuring the ecosystem standards' norms for citizens to living within a clean and safe environment.

Although the importance of these fundamentals for green development is widely accepted, States should provide citizens with greater new insights showing how the private sector and government tasks are the appropriate mix leading to economic development in a cleaner environment. It is now clearer that the private sector and States are complementary. Thus, State action is vital in laying down the institutional foundations for green markets.

Further, much clearer to citizens is that faith in State's ability to sustain effective green policies can be as important for attracting private investment as the policies themselves. Industrial *Man* must understand that this is his responsibility, a pre-requisite for effective public awareness and capacity building.



## *Balancing Friendships between Man and Nature*

Growing scarcity of the critically interwoven fundamental elements including water, food and energy supply is quite an obvious fact caused by climate change and global overpopulation. Global community bringing together public and private sectors ought to combine efforts to resolve such issues as they require an integrated approach.

If *Man* considers *Nature* as his opponent, then he should test *Nature's* resilience. *Nature* does not understand such a language as 'resilience', but *Man* does. To maintain a good balance of friendships between *Man* and *Nature*, the latter may, however, be willing to commit itself in order to integrate *Man's* demands, if these demands are reasonable. Natural harmony and responsiveness convey both sensibility and pacifism perfectly. *Man* should try a bit, so that the world's population can live peacefully and in harmony with *Nature*.



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