

Proposal for Awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Pioneers of Sustainable Development

It was the intention of Alfred Nobel to promote peace with his endowment of the Nobel Peace Prize. His vision has been realized over the years to a degree he could not have envisioned, as now the Peace Prize has become humanity's pre-eminent and ultimate recognition of the efforts of individuals and organizations to reduce and avoid human oppression and suffering, of which war is merely the ultimate provocation.

But the award of a Nobel Peace Prize can also work to prevent human suffering and war. A prize that both acknowledges past achievement and proactively works to reduce suffering and warfare is the ultimate legacy of Alfred Nobel.

Today humanity faces a threat to its well-being, a provocation of war and suffering beyond anything it has faced before. That threat is the devastation of Earth's resources and ecosystems to the extent that human habitation will be difficult, if not impossible, on the one and only home available to us. As it is said, "There is no Planet B."

In recent decades there has developed a field that has addressed and reduced many of the stressors that form an existential threat to human habitation on Earth. Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, the advent of the field of **Sustainable Development** has had a deep and spreading influence on thought, culture, and the direction of the human enterprise. The present proposal advances the idea that a Nobel Peace Prize awarded to individuals and organizations who have been instrumental in the origination and elaboration of the field of Sustainable Development would not only be suitable recognition of transformation to a more peaceful world, in line with Alfred Nobel's wishes, but would help to further the achievement of peace and human well-being long into the future, also undoubtedly Mr. Nobel's intention.

It is in that regard that we are advancing the current proposal that the Nobel Peace Prize be awarded to pioneers of the field of Sustainable Development. What could be a more worthy candidate for Nobel Peace Prize recognition than an entire field devoted to ending violence to the Earth, which goes hand in hand with ending violence to each other and future generations through economic exploitation.

The clearest support for the proposed award comes from the Nobel Committee's own proceedings. In selection of Wangari Maathai for the Peace Prize in 2004, the Committee cited "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace." In today's world, sustainable development and peace are inextricably related.

The work of the Norwegian Refugee Council (www.nrc.no) also offers ample testimony to the inextricable coupling between regional and world peace and sustainable development. The links between peace and ecological security have been carefully monitored over the years by humanitarian organizations such as the Norwegian Refugee Council, which are actively promoting measures for adaptation to global change by vulnerable groups in Africa, such as the Sudan, where drought is associated with migration and violence. The expanding scale of the human economy stresses ecological services essential for sustaining agriculture, global biodiversity, and even human survival. Such stresses are also the cause of competition over scarce resources and interfere with efforts to secure lasting peace. Oscar Arias, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, increasingly emphasized the links between peace and environmental security, as essential to building a constructive dialogue in Central America and at a global level.

The connection, overlap, and even interoperability of *peace* and *sustainable development* are obvious, as is the converse. In a world treading the path of *unsustainable* development, future oppression, exploitation, and conflict are ominously clear consequences.

The pioneers of Sustainable Development for whom this proposal seeks Peace Prize recognition are **Dr. Herman Daly**, **Dr. William Rees**, and **the Club of Rome** for its sponsorship and commissioning of the seminal Limits to Growth study, representing respectively the disciplines of Economy, Ecology, and Environmental Sciences. Al Gore and the IPCC shared the Nobel in 2007 "*for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change.*" While this award was deserved, the IPCC focuses on a single symptom of a systemic malady. Daly, Rees and the Club of Rome in contrast accurately diagnose the deeper problems, and offer systemic solutions.

While there are many organizations and individuals that have been instrumental in the advent and advancement of the field of Sustainable Development, the current proposal identifies key individuals and organizations whose work and continual efforts have been most seminal in the field. Toward that end this proposal has drawn upon a unique analysis contained in a paper entitled **References, authors, journals and scientific disciplines underlying the sustainable development literature: a citation analysis** (Nuno Quental, et. al., October, 2011). A copy, highlighted on Page 13, is attached.

It is said that 'what you think is what you become.' This would apply as much to society as to individuals, if not more. So the point of including these sorts of metrics in this proposal is that the work of the individuals comprising our slate of candidates for the Peace Prize has been singularly instrumental in sparking and guiding the formation and unfolding of the process of Sustainable Development, which is itself a fundamental cornerstone of the reduction and avoidance of human suffering and conflict.

The combined work of these intellectuals has led to the exploration of concepts that define 'environmental/ecological space' and to governmental policy considerations of how the share of that space which each human appropriates is important in reducing social conflict. The development of a) laws recognizing the need to account for natural capital depletion and the protection both of endangered species and remaining natural capital, b) programs of payment for environmental services (e.g., pollution trading permits), and even c) judicial, legislative and constitutional stipulations of the right of citizens to enjoy a healthy and clean environment (protection of the commons), are all key examples of this legacy. In the critical evolution and application of these notions, the combined work of the proposed candidates has had impact well beyond the circles of academia and intellectual think tanks. It has provided the very basis for the work of many who are dedicated to those suffering from environmental injustice worldwide, including organized civil society at diverse scales – community, regional, national and international.

The resulting joint work by both academics and practitioners has revealed to what extent such 'socio-environmental' conflicts are a worldwide phenomenon that affects social stability and the quality of life of millions of humans. A clear and revealing example can be found in the cutting-edge results of the EU-funded project EJOLT (Environmental Justice Organizations, Liability and Trade - <http://ejolt.org/>) which has mapped, documented and deconstructed over 1,300 such conflicts worldwide in the Environmental Justice Atlas - <http://ejatlas.org/>. Again, *sustainable development* and *peace* are, for all intents and purposes, tightly coupled in the sense that each is a necessary condition for the other, though sadly not necessarily a sufficient condition for the other.

Dr. Herman Daly - Economics

Herman Daly is a former World Bank Senior Economist (1988-1994) who headed the Environment Department, where he helped to develop policy guidelines related to sustainable development. He is widely regarded as the 'Father of Ecological Economics' and the related field of Steady-State Economics. The notion that economic growth, the currently dominant goal of nearly all nations, corporations and financial institutions can be sustainable lies in contradiction to biophysical and thermodynamic laws. By contrast, a society that seeks qualitative improvements in human well-being rather than quantitative growth in its throughput of materials and energy can be sustainable. This basic recognition is the economic equivalent of the discovery that the Earth is spherical and not flat. It is, unfortunately for us, a realization that human civilization has not fully embraced, that the Earth is limited in its resources and capacity to absorb our wastes. That there is a rapidly growing awareness of these limits in terms of the human economy is a testament to Dr. Daly's visionary work.

His work has spawned an entire field of practitioners of Ecological Economics and many institutions have grown out of it. The impact of his work on the field of Sustainable Development is also clear from the attached Citation Analysis. On Page 13 of that document he is seen to be the number 1 living author (David Pearce is deceased) in the number of times his seminal work has been cited by others in their own work, with 55 published works and with 67% of the citations of those works appearing in the 380 most influential publications. In Google Scholar, Herman Daly is cited 26,866 times.

Herman Daly's seminal work since the 1970s has emphasized the need to recognize limits to the biophysical scale of the global economy. His development of the *Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare* as a basis for measuring sustainable scale, presaged the movement in successive global forums to adapt national accounting systems recognizing *ecosystem services and stocks* as *natural capital assets*. Indicators and models such as the global systems model *World2* developed for the Club of Rome by ecological economists Dennis and Donella Meadows, and the *Ecological Footprint* devised by William Rees and Mathis Wackernagel, echoed in the recent work by Johan R ockstrom and others at the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, can serve as early warning signals to prepare for natural and human caused disasters, thus making it possible to avert massive societal displacements caused by global warming, drought and pestilence.

Dr. William Rees - Ecology

William Rees, is a professor at the University of British Columbia and former director of the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) at that institution. His primary interest is in public policy and planning relating to global environmental trends and the ecological conditions for sustainable socioeconomic development. He is the originator of the 'ecological footprint' concept and co-developer of the method.

The *ecological footprint* has become a very influential quantitative tool that estimates humanity's ecological impact on the ecosphere in terms of appropriated ecosystem (land and water) area. Dr. Rees' research reveals the fundamental incompatibility between continued (and accelerating) material economic growth and ecological security, and has helped to reopen debate on human carrying capacity as a fundamental consideration in sustainable development. In addition, the power of the concept of ecological footprint as a meme, in itself providing a change to the very thinking of society, cannot be underestimated.

The following bit of *off-the-cuff* research illustrates the potential importance of memes and their in reflecting and creating the world we live in. A Google search on '*ecological footprint*' gets 570,000 hits, while '*Brundtland report*', the work of 22 people with UN backing and promotion, returns 119,000, or approximately one fifth as many. A search on '*Nobel Peace Prize*' gets 12,900,000 hits, while search on '*sustainable development*' gets 41,200,000, and a search on

'GDP' gets 129,000,000 or ten times that of the Nobel Peace Prize. While these metrics *prove* nothing, they serve to establish a rough gauge of where human awareness and culture is at.

In the attached Citation Analysis, Dr. Rees ranks second in the number of citations for an ecologist, with 38 published works and 44% of the citations of those works appearing in the 380 most influential publications. In Google Scholar, William Rees is cited 14,714 times. But as a skilled, passionate communicator, one only needs to watch a video of Dr. Rees on YouTube to experience the influence he continues to exert on those interested in Sustainable Development.

The Club of Rome / Limits to Growth Team – Environmental Sciences

The Club of Rome is a global 'think tank' that deals with a variety of international political issues. It is a group of world citizens, sharing a common concern for the future of humanity, consisting of current and former heads of state, UN leadership, high-level politicians and government officials, diplomats, scientists, economists and business leaders from around the globe. It commissioned the influential 1972 report entitled *The Limits to Growth*. Its mission is "to act as a **global catalyst for change** through the identification and analysis of the crucial problems facing humanity and the communication of such problems to the most important public and private decision makers as well as to the general public."

It is for the Club of Rome's commissioning of *The Limits to Growth* report in particular that we propose it as a shared recipient of this Peace Prize. In the attached Citation Analysis the highlighted name D. Meadows, on Page 13 refers to Donella ('Dana') Meadows, the lead researcher and author of the *Limits to Growth* study, along with her husband Dennis Meadows and Jorgen Randers. Thus the *Limits to Growth* study, is the third ranked as an overall set of authors, with two of its three authors still alive. In Google Scholar, the Club of Rome is cited 28,900 times and *The Limits to Growth* study is cited 12,835 times.

By naming the Club of Rome as a recipient we thus recognize and honor both the foresight of that organization as well as the work of the researchers who did the research and compiled the report that basically 'jumpstarted' the field of Sustainable Development with its unavoidable conclusion that human civilization was quickly violating 'the terms of its lease' on its home, planet Earth.

Of course, simple metrics indicating the *quantity* of inspiration that each candidate provided cannot possibly express the *quality* of the work of these individuals and the indelible stamp that it has left on the direction of development in human civilization. But if the Nobel Committee sees fit to advance this nomination to the next stage, the Director of the Nobel Institute will provide more than competent research to support the *quality* of their contribution as well.

Postscript

In urging the Nobel Committee advance this nomination to the next stage of research, we offer the following. The respect and gravity with which the Peace Prize is perceived, has a marked bearing and impact on the future directions of society and thus upon the human enterprise. At a moment when many scientists, economists, diplomats and thinkers of all sorts seriously question our very ability to *survive* in the coming decades due to our onslaught against the natural systems of Earth, and the climate system in particular, the positive impact from an award of the Nobel Peace Prize for these pioneers of Sustainable Development cannot possibly be underestimated.

Submitted with the greatest respect,



Stuart Scott,
IESCO Deputy Director General
International Ecological Safety Collaborative Organization