



## VISIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN 2050

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President**

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The following is a vision for a healthy, peaceful, socially just, economically secure and environmentally sustainable world. This vision is synthesized from the thinking of a large and diverse number of world leaders in many fields of endeavor and reports and programs of the world's most progressive governmental, business, academic and civic organizations. This is a brief representation of what is encapsulated and illustrated in my presentations throughout the year. It is a vision that is vital to achieving sustainability by 2050 and possible with bold, collaborative leadership from all sectors of society.

*This vision of sustainability in 2050 is epitomized by the following...*

**There is widespread understanding and acceptance that health, economic and social progress are dependent on a healthy biosphere.**

**The world population is stabilized at a level that is within the short and long term carrying capacity of the earth's finite resources.**

**The market is the servant in aligning social, economic and natural systems for mutual benefit and sustainability.**

- The throughput of fossil fuels and materials in the economy is reduced by 75%. Non-polluting, renewable energy provides 85% of the world's energy.
- Energy and resource productivity has increased 10 times that of the year 2000.
- We mirror, learn from and live within natural systems: nature as mentor, model and measure. The industrial economy operates on renewable energy in a cyclical manner: eliminating the concept of waste since all industrial outputs will be a raw material or technical nutrient for other industrial operations or will go back into the cycles of nature.
- We use renewable resources at a rate less than or equal to the natural environment's ability to regenerate the resource and preserve the diversity and integrity of the earth's ecosystem services. This means living off nature's income, not its capital by practicing sustainable forestry, sustainable fishing and sustainable agriculture. Biological diversity is once again increasing.

**New Business Models are based on:**

- Increased production of durable, repairable goods and elimination of persistent, toxic and bioaccumulative substances.
- Business focus on providing the ultimate ends of products or services not the products or services themselves. Products are viewed as a means to deliver a service to a customer. Companies own the molecules and consumers lease the services creating incentives for industry to use as little energy and material, minimize waste and design for disassembly and reuse.

### **Transportation, land use and sustainable communities:**

- Low energy consuming and polluting transportation systems now represent half of all transportation.
- Mass transportation is available to half the world's population and 90% of automobiles, trucks and buses are powered by non-polluting fuel cells.
- Sprawl is declining because inner cities have been revitalized to make business and jobs accessible to inner city residents by public transportation, bicycling or walking.
- Strong, healthy, culturally diverse and environmentally sustainable local communities are the goal of economic and social policy.

### **Equity, democracy, peace and security:**

- Government and institutional policies foster intragenerational and intergenerational equity and peace.
- The world literacy rate is 85%. Women have the same opportunities for education as men.
- The majority of people worldwide have access to jobs that provide for basic human needs and family stability. Women have equal access to jobs as men.
- The gap between the richest 20% of the population and the poorest has dropped from 70:1 to 7:1.
- Consumption has been reduced by 75% in the industrialized world and increased sufficiently in developing countries to meet their needs. All consumption is done in a manner that minimizes the ecological footprint and improves the quality of life.
- Non-material means are utilized to meet non-material needs of good family and social relations, meaningful work, and achieving higher aspirations.
- Civic engagement and participatory, open democracy with full human rights is practiced by 75% of the world's population.
- Cultural Diversity is respected and is increasing again.

### **New measures of human and societal well-being:**

- New macroeconomic indicators to supplement Gross Domestic Product...
  1. Adds environmental and social cost side to growth ledger
  2. Accounts for positive impact from non-monetary activity (e.g., parenting and volunteering)
  3. Accounts for future as well as present well-being
  4. Adjusts for income disparities
- Indicators of well-being include: health, economic vitality and equity, community stability, level of education, availability of affordable housing, equal access to transportation and the condition of the natural and built environment.
- Prices reflect all the social, health and environmental costs to society as well as the direct costs and profits to the producers.
- Taxes have been shifted from taxing "desirables" — income, investment, employment — to taxing "undesirables" — resource consumption and depletion, fossil fuel use, pollution, waste, loss of biodiversity.
- Signals of ecological distress are received in time to prevent or remedy damage to humans or the environment.

### **Improved human health:**

- 95% of the world has access to clean water, sanitation and adequate nutritious food.
- Waterborne infectious disease and AIDS have been eliminated as a major cause of illness and death.
- 90% of the world's population live in areas where the air quality is healthful.
- 90% of the world's population has decent, affordable housing.

**Globalization has been humanized to result in:**

- Technology leapfrogging for developing countries.
- Support for democracy and human rights.
- Raising human aspirations.
- Creating more jobs for everyone.
- Reducing the gap between rich and poor.

**International governance has been reformed:**

- World Trade Organization (WTO):
  1. Greater respect for health and environmental issues.
  2. Protects consumer right to know laws.
  3. Allows trade measures to protect global commons.
  4. Defers environmental decisions to environmental treaties.
- Consideration of solving environmental and health problems is integral to World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) lending.
- The United Nations has been reconstituted to be more democratic and to be the chief peacekeeper and advocate for a just and sustainable world.
- Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) have used the Internet to develop cross border political alliances.

**The Global Climate has been restabilized:**

- The global climate has restabilized to the level it was at in 1950. This has happened through a 75% reduction in fossil fuels and a 50% increase in forested land worldwide.

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**Second Nature** is an educational nonprofit that works directly with colleges and universities from across the United States to assist them in making the concept of sustainability a core part of all teaching, learning, research, professional development, campus operations, investments and collaboration with local and regional communities. We define Education for Sustainability as follows: *a learning experience which provides the awareness, knowledge, skills and values to help all current and future generations achieve good health, social equity and stability, and economic security while restoring and sustaining the earth's life support systems*

Dr. Cortese and senior staff provide presentation and consultation services at national and international conferences, meetings, workshops and targeted events, about the critical role of higher education in creating a sustainable future. Second Nature's president and senior staff are frequently called upon to make presentations as keynote speakers, plenary presenters or panelists at international, national, regional and local conferences. Second Nature principals also work with groups of higher education leaders on campuses, such as presidents, facilities managers, faculty and student leaders for consultation about steps to take in making their campus more sustainable. Detailed information on the wide variety of events that we have contributed to is available through our website <<http://www.secondnature.org>>.

*For more information see:*

Vision Section of Second Nature's website: [www.secondnature.org/vision](http://www.secondnature.org/vision)

*Additional Websites:*

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| American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy    | <a href="http://www.aceee.org/">http://www.aceee.org/</a>                             |
| AtKisson & Associates                               | <a href="http://atkisson.com/">http://atkisson.com/</a>                               |
| Center for a New American Dream                     | <a href="http://www.newdream.org/">http://www.newdream.org/</a>                       |
| International Institute for Sustainable Development | <a href="http://iisd1.iisd.ca/">http://iisd1.iisd.ca/</a>                             |
| International Society of Ecological Economics       | <a href="http://www.ecologicaleconomics.org/">http://www.ecologicaleconomics.org/</a> |
| Natural Capitalism                                  | <a href="http://www.naturalcapitalism.org/">http://www.naturalcapitalism.org/</a>     |
| Northwest Environment Watch                         | <a href="http://www.northwestwatch.org/">http://www.northwestwatch.org/</a>           |
| Redefining Progress                                 | <a href="http://www.rprogress.org/">http://www.rprogress.org/</a>                     |
| Sustainability Institute                            | <a href="http://www.sustainer.org/">http://www.sustainer.org/</a>                     |
| The Natural Step                                    | <a href="http://www.naturalstep.org">http://www.naturalstep.org</a>                   |
| World Resources Institute                           | <a href="http://www.wri.org">http://www.wri.org</a>                                   |
| WorldWatch Institute                                | <a href="http://www.worldwatch.org">http://www.worldwatch.org</a>                     |

*Additional websites focusing on Student Activities:*

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| Campus Ecology Program of the National Wildlife Federation | <a href="http://www.nwf.org/campus">http://www.nwf.org/campus</a>                                   |
| Center for Environmental Citizenship                       | <a href="http://www.envirocitizen.org">http://www.envirocitizen.org</a>                             |
| Campus Green Vote  | <a href="http://www.envirocitizen.org/cgv/index.asp">http://www.envirocitizen.org/cgv/index.asp</a> |
| ecopledge.com  | <a href="http://www.ecopledge.com">http://www.ecopledge.com</a>                                     |
| Global Organization of Students for Environmental Action   | <a href="http://www.farolterra.web.pt/gosea/">http://www.farolterra.web.pt/gosea/</a>               |
| State PIRGs  | <a href="http://www.pirg.org">http://www.pirg.org</a>   |
| Student Conservation Association                           | <a href="http://www.sca-inc.org">http://www.sca-inc.org</a>   |
| Student Alliance to Reform Corporations (STARC)            | <a href="http://www.corpreform.org">http://www.corpreform.org</a>                                   |
| Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC)              | <a href="http://www.seac.org">http://www.seac.org</a>   |
| Student Public Interest Network                            | <a href="http://www.sehn.org/pubintres.html">http://www.sehn.org/pubintres.html</a>                 |