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## **POVERTY, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

The article discusses factors that influence the preparation and responses in the general cycle of emergencies and disasters (environmental contexts, social, political, economic, cultural and institutional) integrating psychological, social and physical knowledge about sustainability, vulnerability and risks. The conflict between development, poverty, the environment and peace has become one of the biggest evidence of the human current difficulties.

Mankind has not only of the achievements and benefits of development; but also, the undesirable effects produced by this, as social inequalities, poverty, environmental degradation and weakening of the sense of community, otherness and security.

For Vieira (2005, p. 333) "harmonization of relationships that humans have with nature and the obstinate struggle by the pacification of relations between human beings constitute the two sides of the same coin." The idea of sustainable development has a chance to overcome the end envisioned. But there are those who preach the need for a paradigm shift in the concept. In today's society it is the eminence of unsustainability is global economic, social or environmental. A "cultural mutation" is necessary for sustainable development if organize around the following key relationships: with nature, with time, between citizens, and with the authority of the State.

Pol (2002, p. 296) warns that, you can understand why sustainability, has "... a strong load of change of individual and social behavior and therefore requires knowledge of social and psychosocial processes involved."

Thus, sustainable development requires action that can be called generically of participatory management and environmental education (awareness and availability of resources that lead to the development of habits and skills), to achieve shared social values from the formulation of plans and programmes aimed at changing behaviors and eradication of poverty.

**Keywords:** Participation; Poverty; Quality of Life; New Paradigm; Sustainability.

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## 1. Introduction

What would the man without nature? The question you raise several issues and there would be different ways of interpreting. And, looking at the inventive capacity of man is not the defenders of that nature depends on the man. But in another perspective of who looks at the possible limitations and humbly, I note that the man depends on the nature. Recent events prove that man needs more of nature and the precise nature of their man less.

The man needs more of nature and all its benefits, which leads to a rapid pace to take it which is useful for survival. This dependence leads to reduction in supply capacity of nature to man. Realizing this inverse dynamics of supply and demand, we need to meditate and seek answers to the human existence is threatened and cause less conflicts and for ecosystems.

The United Nations, met in February 2001 in Kenya, in Twenty Ministerial and Global Governing Board on the environment, approved the resolution 21/15, which recommended to the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program, to develop and promote knowledge; i) the links between the environment and poverty; ii) means that make life more productive and sustainable populations in environmental plan; and iii) correct policy options for Governments.

Currently, the global concern with the preservation of natural and environmental resources and the search for the so-called sustainable development, are being developed research aimed at identifying the causes, the cause and the main consequences of environmental degradation, as well as research in search of alternatives to solving problems brought by environmental degradation. As Alier (1998) and Hayes and Nadkarni (2001), this degradation occurs in both countries as in developing countries, both in the developed urban as in rural, though, in particular, the pressure that the production and the population in goods and services generated by the use of natural resources.

However, the question that involves environmental degradation ceded space, after the report entitled "our common future" (World Commission on environment and Development WCED, 1987; WCED 1991), a view that developing countries play a role in the degradation of natural resources even more expressive than the developed countries. This report, also known as the Brundtland report, environmental degradation has become associated with the degree of poverty of the population, since this is considered a major cause and a major effect of environmental degradation, which resulted in a number of studies aimed to detect any relationship between the condition of poverty and environmental degradation.

However, this vicious circle between poverty and environmental degradation is questioned by some authors. As stated by Broad (1994) and by Reardon and Vosti (1995), the vicious circle is parsed such that the condition of poverty is portrayed through a unique concept, reducing in this way, the scope of the condition of life. To do this, highlight the assumptions of literature, considered the mainstream of sustainable development, the Brundtland report (World Commission on environment and Development WCED, 1987) as theoretical basis, as well as the criticism of these assumptions made by authors who do not agree, even in part, with the conditions cited by the report.

## **2. The Relationship Between Poverty and Environment: The Vision of the Mainstream**

One of the views on the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation, regarded as sustainable development mainstream by several authors (Syndrome and Bojo1999; Pearce and Warford, 1993; Vision, 1993; Broad, 1994; Prakash, 1997), expressive and straightforward relationship between poverty and environmental degradation. This is because the poor depend on natural resources to survive and, in an attempt to ensure its survival, explore these resources unsustainably Alier (1998), surpassing the ability to self-regeneration (carrying capacity).

The Brundtland report (World Commission development environment, WCED 1987) is cited as the reference mark of this literature and brings in his theoretical body that the condition of poverty is greater and greater effect of environmental degradation, where "(...) poor people are forced to use excessively the environmental resources to survive and the fact that the degradation of their environment, making further impoverishes the their survival even more difficult and uncertain "(WCED, 1991, p. 29). With this, the condition of poverty falls into the trap of poverty (the poverty trap thesis), where the poor, to survive, degrade the environment and this degradation exacerbates the condition of poverty through a vicious circle or vicious cycle. In that sense, the approach of the mainstream on the poverty trap or vicious circle suggests that policies that relieve the condition of poverty cause, as a result, the preservation of natural resources and vice versa.

However, Syndrome and Bojö (1999), to treat the theme poverty and environment, the Brundtland report does not specify the conditions under which can be sustained the hypothesis of the circle. In addition, the report does not take into account the various dimensions of poverty and the environment, the results of this relationship are, even partially, incomplete (Reardon and Vosti, 1995; Largo, 1994).

A careful empirical analysis shows that assumptions about the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation, quoted in the Brundtland report, does not apply to all situations, in other words, while the poverty trap occurs under certain conditions and does not occur under other. Such conditions, as the social, political and economic context institutional, are important to understanding this relationship and, consequently, on the conclusions of the circle possible.

Aspects of the relationship between poverty and the environment, according to the literature, make mention of a single causal relationship, where poverty causes environmental degradation and poverty causes environmental degradation, an exercise which, according to the author, only supports ideological positions and not pointed the way to reverse the damage.

## **3. Poverty and Environmental Degradation: Multidimensional Phenomena**

According to Ratliff (1993), poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, multi-ethnic and structural and which is characterized by economic factors, social, political, cultural and environmental. With that, the measurement of poverty through indicators of only one dimension, such as income, may lead to discrepancies in the interpretation and understanding of the broader phenomenon. The complexity that involves the concept of poverty, with definitions and

perceptions differ, there is a wide variation in estimates of poverty incidence, even in studies related to the same region.

For Prakash (1997), the only income-based method for measuring poverty, does not provide a correct interpretation of the impoverishment of communities that depend on natural resources compared to the communities do not depend on the environment to survive. With that, disagreements on how to measure poverty and environmental degradation, through a poverty line based on income or through a variety of indexes of the country, contributing to the behavior of the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation is not, in fact, understand Keck, (1998).

According to the International Union for Conservation of nature-IUCN (2003, p. 8), the condition of multidimensional poverty must take into account when examining the relationship between this condition and environmental degradation, because "poverty is a complex concept and cannot be precisely measured and understood by static indexes as the poverty line". In this sense, Reardon and Vosti (1995), show that the direction and intensity of the relationship between poverty and environment vary according to the composition of goods that poor people have access and the types of environmental problems that they face. According to these authors, the individual may be poor in relation to income, but cannot be poor in relation to access to health and education and public services provided. In this respect, environmental degradation can occur due to the use of toxic chemicals and agro and not through deforestation and uncontrolled burning.

A critical view of the conventional sense of the relationship between poverty and the environment, can be substantiated from the question "who protects which environment?". When trying to answer the question, we found an image of the poor that degrades the environment that emerges from a conventional literature that distorts, which creates the need to establish a new set of analytical categories to understand dynamically the relationship between poverty and the environment.

The condition of poverty, the composition of the indicators that reflect environmental degradation is quite complex and the development of these indicators requires not only an understanding of concepts and definitions, but also a good understanding of the needs that these indicators are being formulated.

The relationship between poverty and environmental degradation must be analyzed in order to generate significant results for formulating policies to alleviate the condition of poverty and preservation of the environment, it is interesting that the condition of poverty is defined in a comprehensive manner, as a phenomenon of multiple dimensions (Syndrome and Bulge, 1999). Similarly, environmental degradation must be characterized in various ways to express the various dimensions of the phenomenon, thus contributing to a better understanding of this relationship.

#### 4. Development, Poverty and Environment

Social, cultural and environmental policies were being progressively undertaken within a development perspective, on a strict view watching the development as economic growth, represented only by the gross national product or gross domestic product, total and *per capita*, and ignoring the approaches that take into account the quality of human life.

One of those approaches that look to the quality of life, and measure from the indicators used in the preparation of the human development report, which integrates the concepts of sustainability and human development. To this end, considers the notion of organic load *capacity*, i.e. the ability of ecosystems to perpetuate the life of various species. Although well-known and used in specific scientific areas such as Ecology, only a few decades is that this idea of the ability-support the environment has been linked to economic growth and human development as a whole.

From the premise of a harmonious integration of economic and social development for nature, Maurice Strong and Ignacy Sachs (1972) formulated the concept of eco-development, designed mainly for rural areas of third world countries. This model takes into account the potential of each ecosystem, with suitable technical and economic use of native resources, besides the participation of local populations, based on three basic principles: economic efficiency, social justice and ecological prudence.

The implementation of these principles, Sachs points five dimensions of sustainability, to be considered simultaneously in the development planning process:

- Social sustainability-this dimension reiterates the urgent need for greater equity in the distribution of goods and services, taking into account the material and immaterial needs;
- Economic sustainability-linked to the idea of macro social efficiency, that is, allocation and more efficient management of the general resources available in a society and not just as a criterion of profitability of business;
- Ecological sustainability-binds to a series of measures to simplify production processes and final consumption, seeking total system efficiency of eco. So, includes both the practice contained in the RRR (reduce, reuse, recycle), how much clean technology research and the definition of rules and instruments for the protection of the environment;
- Territorial sustainability-gives special attention to the problems of rural-urban setting, thus leading to a better balance in the territorial distribution of human settlements;
- Cultural sustainability-search local cultural specificities, favoring indigenous solutions (Sachs, 1993).

Therefore, the attention, firstly, development issues, poverty and environment, weaving, below are some considerations on the concepts of quality of life and environmental quality and its implications for the construction of social and environmental indicators.

Some authors associate the types of environmental degradation to the level of development of each country or region: this way, indicate the existence of typical degradation of rich countries, which is that as a result of industrial pollution and, on the other hand, the deterioration of the

associated with poverty, whether by poor sanitary conditions, both by the occupation of hazardous areas on the periphery of urban centers generated.

On the other hand, the importance of ensuring both synchronous solidarity (towards the present generations, especially with regard to needy populations on the planet), as a diachronic solidarity (in relation to future generations). In the second half of the years 80, the Brundtland Commission publishes his famous report, which explains the idea of sustainable development which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The great contribution of this report refers to the spread of the idea of economic, social and environmental interdependence of activities carried out in all regions of the planet, that is, both the greenhouse gas emissions in industrialized countries, from degradation caused by the intense misery in the poorest countries. It is important to consider that, within a holistic approach and the vision of the planet as a living being, not only can view the interrelationship between events that occur in places sometimes very distant, as well as both individuals and corporations and Governments are responsible for the care of the environment.

## 5. Quality of Life and Environmental Quality

Thinking about quality of life as a multidimensional concept, which covers both material and immaterial aspects, can be mentioned the autonomy and self-determination over life itself as key factors to transform the quality of life of the populations at risk (children, young people and the elderly poor).

In this way, the sustainable human development should be sought and practiced at various levels, starting with individual attitudes ", to try to reduce the *ecological footprint*, the pig mark on the planet. More specifically on human development, it is interesting to note that in the design of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), consists of "(...) a process of expansion of choices [no timing] people, and raise the level of well-being "(human development report 1997, p. 15.), namely, to improve their quality of life.

Amartya Sen, refers to the universe of things (goods and services), related to the notion of economic utility in counterpoint to the universe of people (features and character of the relations of the people — friends, community, etc.) that binds to an idea of non-utility. Sen, criticizes the vision of those who advocate the only utility to evaluate the "standard of living, quality of life, efficiency of social arrangements, Justice of distributions and redistribution" and the "social indicators" movement took into account widely, these aspects of non-utility to measure the quality of life.

The introduction of the characteristics of people opens an alternative view, non-utility, on quality of life: people would be the best women of their own health needs (Culyer, 1990, p. 12).

According to Sharma (1982, p. 15), the quality of life "(...) covers both the distribution of the assets of citizenship (the property and rights that a society, at a given moment, believes they are

essential) and a series of collective assets less tangible nature and no less real in its consequences for social welfare ".

The United Nations point of view, the quality of life is related with the satisfaction of citizens with regard to access to food, health care and life insurance, knowledge, good work conditions, security against crime and physical violence, to leisure and to participation in economic, cultural and political activities of the community. In this way, the quality of life is understood as a product good or essential to meet the needs of the customer, whether an individual or a community. The idea of necessity, prerequisite and inevitable, however, not restricted to economic definitions, because, then, to improve the quality of life, increase production and promote the distribution of goods (Ferreira, 1995).

The quality of life can be measured through three types of indicators: performance indicators, consumption indicators and indicators of access. The result would be possible to see the levels of satisfaction of the basic needs of a given population, similarly to the view defended by the United Nations; such examples are the infant mortality rate, life expectancy and illiteracy. Consumption indicators relate to the means or resources to the population to meet their basic needs; as examples, the number of schools and hospitals, the number of doctors per inhabitant and average income. Finally, the access indicators expressing difficulties to obtain a good or service, even if they exist in sufficient quantity; in this type, adjust the distances between homes and schools or health centers and costs (even indirect) that the population has to enjoy basic services.

For the social and environmental quality assessment takes into account the severity of existing environmental problems, according to two criteria: (a) the impact that a problem has on the health of human beings; (b) the degree of damage that the environmental problem can bring to aggravate the depletion of natural resources, which are essential for a sustainable Biosphere (Hardoy; Satterthwaite, 1990).

In the same line of thought, Gallopín (1982) explains that "(...) the environmental conditions to which they are exposed people to relate closely the quality of life, a concept whose fundamental referent is the individual person. Thus, environmental quality, to the author, is defined based on the analysis of the human environment, i.e. on the basis of the quality of life of human beings. It is appropriate to distinguish between objective and subjective components of environmental quality in accordance with their perceived environmental quality and estimated. Environmental quality assessment represents the State of the different environmental components based on inter-subjectivity judgments applied to measurements or estimates of the conditions. The perceived environmental quality already represents a subjective evaluation of environmental quality, made by individuals.

Now of course, that the development of social indicators research is due, above all, the need for information for the planning and implementation of public policies on the improvement of the quality of life, seeking data that it would be better to clarify the dynamics of processes and structures, the objectives, the opinions and values of each particular society. In principle, these data were primarily economic content, in a second moment, join the "social" data, such as those relating to health and education and, more recently, the environmental data.

## 6. Sustainable Development

The environmental issue has only been the subject of concern, recently, more precisely during the 20th century. For Kässmayer (2005), this concern was born at the time of the political and economic reconstruction of Nations devastated by World War II. At the same time that experience great economic growth, especially in Europe and United States, accelerated environmental degradation, thus increasing the first discussions on the environment and its relationship with development. In a clear conflict of economic condition is also boosting the degradation.

The countries, in accordance with the capitalist economy, were divided into developed and undeveloped, those with low human development index-HDI. According to Stefaniak (2011, p. 106) "socio-economic issue of these underdeveloped countries of the third world, they take the call (at any cost), sacrifice especially its natural resources". The author adds that "the effects of economic growth are devastating for the environment untidy and the signs of the seriousness of the situation begin to appear, especially caused by pollution.

In the Decade of 60, was marked by the devastation of the environment, encouraging exacerbated to the growth of the third world countries, without taking into consideration the impact that would cause. Sparemberger (2006) States that "[...] with the advent of environmental movements of 60, the earth should be seen as a network of relationships, where all beings (alive or not) are each other in a relationship of interdependence, which can only be understood through a break with the Cartesian model of development ". She still comes to the logical conclusion that "understanding the life phenomenon, necessarily require a multi-disciplinary analysis" (Sparemberger, 2006, p. 16).

Even so, having regard to the information brought by Sparemberger, our interdependence is independent of the social classes, Shankar (2006, p. 97) believes that "the capitalist model has no policies to achieve social justice, of course, because this is not part of your purpose, saying that is the possibility of developing remote and underdeveloped countries achieve economic development in rich countries". Of course, this model has a nature ecological, demanding more than ever of the discussions that are reaching the contemporary life model to avoid mass destruction.

Leff (2005) points out that natural resources are finite and non-renewable, sustainability emerging as the limit of rule to examine a new economic order for the maintenance of life on the planet. "The ideology of progress and growth without limits contrasts with the rule of regenerate limit of nature; from the restructuring of the world for construction an rational alternative" (Leff, 2005, p. 17).

On the principle that natural resources are finite, the interesting Stefaniak information (2011), citing the living planet in the report of the global nature of 2006, make it clear that the human being consumes 25% more than the earth can restore, therefore, more than proved that the system is not restored. You realize that society has reached the advanced stage of industrial capitalism, encouraged by short-lived products or usefulness for consumption, become impulsive or fashion designer.



Scheffer (2012), in his article entitled "sustainable development and modernity: a mismatch announced" clarifies that "[...] It is assumed that it is impossible in the capitalist world to achieve sustainable development or to guarantee quality of life, our and future generations ". However adds that "this failure must not invalidate the various efforts aimed at improving man's relationship with nature, however, the boundaries are many. Understand the limits should not mean stagnation, but the expansion of awareness of the problem and of course change the take. "

The concept of sustainable consumption, the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development from the Agenda 21<sup>st</sup> has defined as being:

"The use of services and related products, which meet the basic needs and deal with better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials, waste and emissions of pollutants during the life cycle of products and services, not to neglect the needs of future generations".

The expression became popular, however, its applicability still remains an enigma, because capitalism as a system prevents the application of ecological values. What we can say, and the promotion of the consumption of products that produce less impacts and consequences on the environment.

"The idea of sustainability emerges as a theoretical possibility and politics to oppose the environmental crisis, leveraged by economic growth and reinforces the evidence of an ecological collapse. However, by adopting a purely anthropocentric outline when it becomes highlighted the need for economic development of people who yearned for social justice. Even considering the prospect of economic growth at any cost, known to lead humanity to the ecological disaster. The social necessity versus environmental necessity requires overcoming the environmental vision of a radical environmentalism, contributing to the construction of an anthropocentric and economy to an ecological sustainability, in the perspective of sustainable development (STEFANIAK, 2011, p. 104).

So, we can say that sustainability is to achieve balanced exploitation of natural resources, damaging the environment as little as possible. Following this same line of reasoning is the concept of responsible consumption, to Antunes (2011), would be to choose products that cause less impact to the environment "[...] That is, since the production of raw materials, the manufacturing process of the product, packaging and distribution, to use, to the final destination. There is no product with zero impact on the environment. All our acts of consumption have consequences "(Antunes, p. 01, 2011).

Will only be able to talk about alternatives to the environmental crisis from the moment they realize that this model presented is sold out and destroys sources of livelihoods of all people. The society is interconnected in such a way that attitudes must be taken around the world. The majority of society can live while ignoring the future. The lack of concern with the future generation causes people to live as if it existed only today, however, the disasters caused by environmental impacts are visible in this generation, therefore, every human being is a link to achieve the objective of preserving the planet.

Souza (2008, p. 15) "culturally, the societies were educated to understand natural resources are inexhaustible and that are at the disposal of mankind to promote development", but the paradigm shift must be encouraged, particularly with the use of the education for sustainable development. To vampire (2005) "the debate on sustainable development also happened to revolve around this vague idea of durability, though its genesis, in the sense of being much more accurate. The question was whether and under which conditions – such a process would not be compromised by the destruction of their own natural foundations ". The sustainable development of expression ended up legitimizing the compatibility between the continuous economic growth and the preservation of the environment, stating that there may be growth without destruction.

On the theoretical construction of Sachs (2009, p. 75) the criteria used to achieve sustainability are the following:

- 1) Social: based on a fair distribution of income, to get a social homogeneity and achieve a reasonable quality of life;
- 2) Cultural: respect for cultural diversity of people for the implementation of eligible projects for each mode of life, in balance with the local ecosystem;
- 3) Ecological preservation of nature's potential, with the use of non-renewable resources and stimulation of the use and production of renewable resources;
- 4) Environment: Considering the potential for recovery of ecosystems;
- 5) Territorial: establish strategies for environmental development especially safe in areas where ecosystems are more fragile, seeking to overcome regional disparities;
- 6) Economic technological modernization for development of the balance;
- 7) National politics: democracy, for the sake of greater social participation;
- 8) International policy: international cooperation, in particular to overcome inequality and environmental protection as a world heritage site.

In this tuning fork, the environmental vision, with its wider concept sustainable development relies on the tripod of the environmental, economic and social sustainability. However, Stefaniak (2011) States that the development based on these pillars proved ineffective so that the environment is preserved, unable to stop even the degradation, as structured projects were insufficient or of poor visibility and even served the ecological cause, but specifically, not cripple the crisis. In addition, the concepts of sustainability and sustainable development is not to be confused, it is the intention of preserving this way, even against the human actions, the second has the dominant idea of conservation of environmental resources, to allow human actions and the exploitation of environmental goods line (STEFANIAK, 2011).

## 7. Conclusion

The environmental crisis is the crisis of humanity itself. There is no refuse and has no knowledge of the situations that occur, are reversible or can be alleviated. To do this, society needs to be aware of the situation and not knowing if there are rollbacks, start with small changes. In the short term, the solutions seem impractical, but it is necessary to think long term and start with the education for sustainability, in addition to campaigns to ensure that the community is involved in conscious and eco-friendly consumption.

The liability of the State should be considered, because they encourage consumption and the capitalist model gives healthy future. Overconsumption with living standards beyond the basic minimum raises the environmental crisis, perhaps irreversible. United Nation educational, scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), published in 2002, "the spiral of sustainable development can only be reversed by means of actions covering simultaneously social, economic and conservation objectives". The nature of form, subject to the logic of the market, is not consistent with sustainable consumption. All ecological crimes of the day are committed to environmental issues disgust in the name of economic growth.

For Meadows et al. (2001), a contemporary of poverty analysis does not take into account one important dimension: the isolation and lack of social relations. Just as there are different forms of capital, such as the natural, social capital, financial, human, and there are different forms of poverty. With that, to understand the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation is required for poverty assessments form multiple dimensions, causes and implications that are characteristic to the phenomenon of poverty and the environment, and the challenge for analysts of contemporary poverty is to build a structure that is complex enough to incorporate such dimensions.

Turned up (1991), in turn, examining the studies on the relationship between social and environmental phenomena, suggests that poverty and environmental degradation have complex causes and far-reaching. The author argues that who presents the hypothesis of the trap of poverty or vicious circle as a fundamental premise of sustainable development dominant tends to ignore important factors, such as socio-political changes in agrarian reform, for example, changes in cultural values of communities.

The different environmental factors, can affect various dimensions of poverty in various ways. These relationships are specific contexts and have different functions, depending on the nature of local communities and civil society organizations, as well as micro and macro levels as the institutional definition of property rights, gender relations and the role of the State. The relationship between poverty and the environment is complex and dynamic and difficult to be understood in all its dimensions, since there is a variety of different ways in which the poor are linked to natural resources.

For many religions and cultures, nature is a sacred place where ancestors are revered, are the cults of evocation of a rain God, where boys and girls are subject to initiation rites and other practices that, since ancient times, serve as a source of spiritual guidance for many generations and societies. The destruction of these spaces results in the dismantling of the social centers, the loss of cultural identity and other valuable practices of social cohesion. Cultural enrichment or ecosystem services are among the most overlooked ecosystem services. So, are being destroyed to apace as ecosystems are being degraded.

In many places, ecosystems are being exploited at levels that exceed its capacity to regenerate, causing its destruction. The consequences are various: there are growing shortages of food, there is the disappearance of significant plant species used in medicine, construction, energy sources, leaving the poorest and most vulnerable people. Both the rich and the poor are responsible for the degradation of ecosystems. Unfortunately, poverty often contributes to the destruction of

ecosystems due to lack of access to alternative solutions for your needs. However, the consequences are felt with greater intensity to the poor, because these depend directly on ecosystems.

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