

# **The Sustainable Economies Treaty: Unpacking the Complexities of Globalization Through Localization**

Ashwani Vasishth

[vasishth@ramapo.edu](mailto:vasishth@ramapo.edu)

Center for Sustainability,  
Ramapo College of New Jersey

# **Not Just a Single Global Economy! Sustainable Economies!**

- The world comprises many economies, at many levels—not just the global economy, or the national economy, but a plethora of regional and local economies as well. Any alternative economic system should promote all these economies, and not just the current capitalistic-corporate mode of globalization. Even a so-called “green” economy that continues to focus on a singular growth-driven, high technology, free-market, intellectual property rights-dominated system, is no green economy at all.

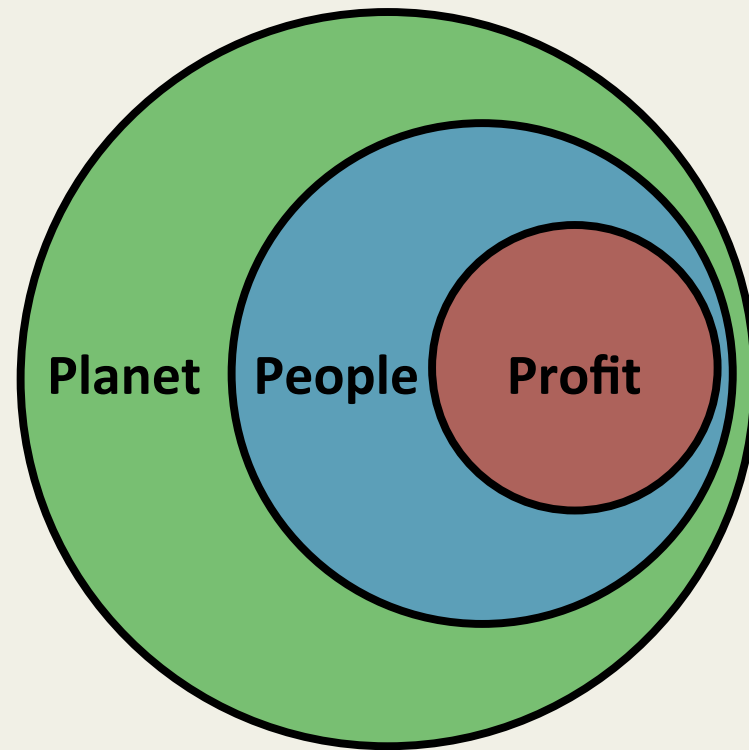
# Changing How We Measure Success for the World's Diverse Economies

- The time has come to transcend growth-based metrics such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which do not distinguish between “good” and “bad” ways of spending money, and move toward a more sophisticated set of indicators that more realistically take account of genuine progress towards human wellbeing, the restoration of natural capital, and the protection of other forms of life. This will allow us to transition to a planetary system of resource and wealth management, one that better nurtures and restores the global commons to sustainability in the long-run. What we need is a system of economic control that is sophisticated enough to allow the implementation of concepts of justice such as Contraction and Convergence—in which nations across the board commit themselves to addressing and dismantling the acutely increasing levels of economic disparity and deprivation, while the richer nations necessarily contract their consumption, while poorer nations continue to develop in a manner that allows all nations to converge toward a fairly equitable future state of development.

# Equity within Planetary Limits as the Foundation of a System of Sustainable Economies

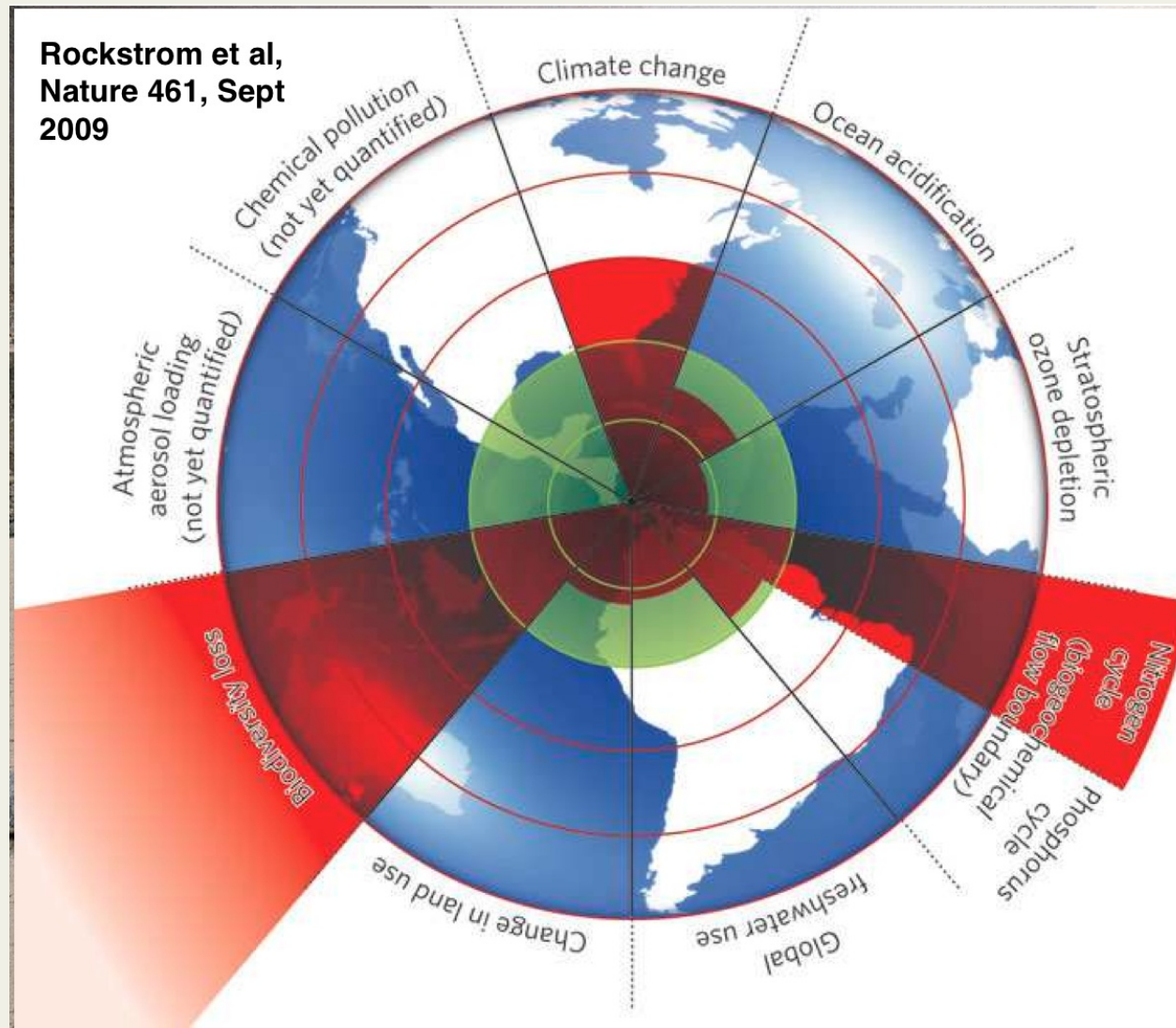
- The foundation for a system of sustainable economies must rest firmly on a much more equitable world order. The fundamental objective of the system must be the promotion of well-being for all within the biogeochemical limits set by our physical planet. Building upon the ideas of Sustainable Consumption and Production, we need an economic system that moves beyond the notion of mere economic *efficiency* to the broader objective of economic *sufficiency*, based on achieving social, environmental and economic integrity. Such a system would transcend the notion of a growth-based “trickle-down” economy, to one that seeks to alleviate poverty by implementing policies that more directly help people to break the poverty-trap to assure the redistribution of wealth, both globally and regionally, on a much more equitable basis.

# A Stricter Triple Bottom Line

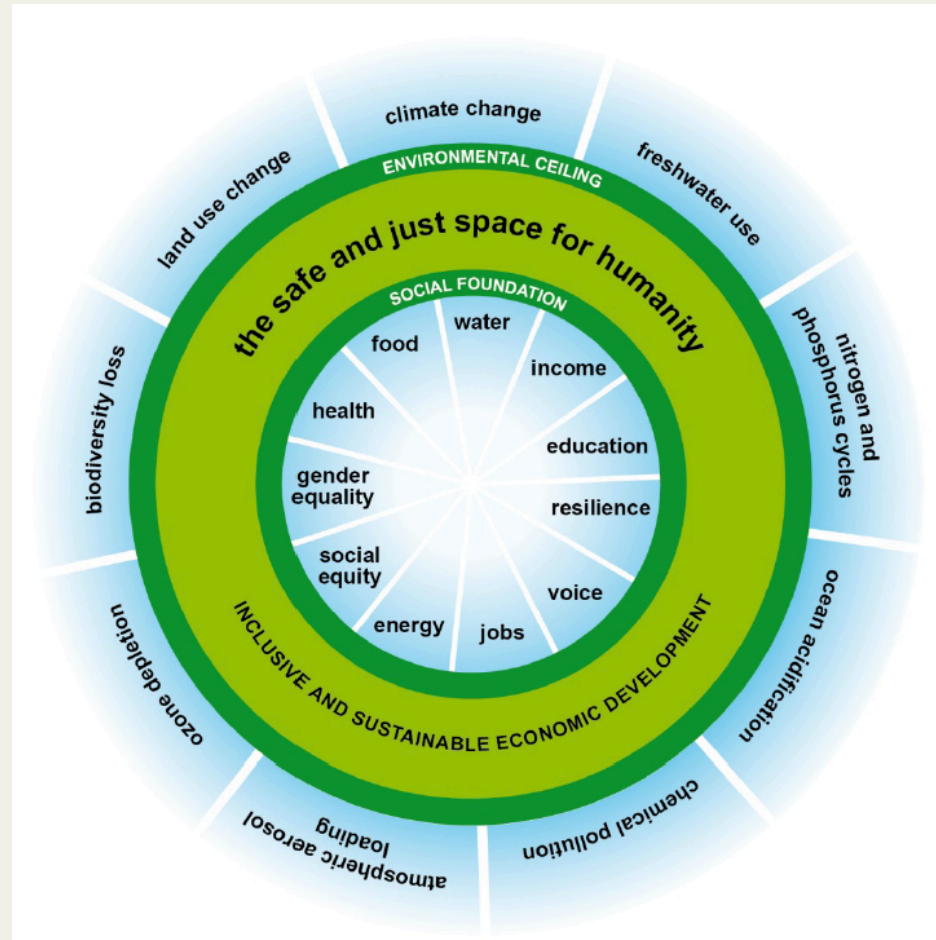


Profit becomes a design requirement for the transactional world, but not the objective

# A Safe Operating Space for Humanity



# A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: Oxfam “Donut”



# The Principles

- The Earth Integrity and Planetary Boundaries Principle
- The Resilience-by-Localization Principle
- The Equity, Dignity and Justice Principle
- The Inclusive Governance Principle
- Beyond-GDP and the Sufficiency Principle
- Internalizing Externalities and the Precautionary-Polluter-Pays Principle
- The Restitution of Natural Capital and Social Capital Principle



# Factors of Production

## Capitalism

- Land

- Labor

- **Capital**

# Factors of Production

<b>Capitalism</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>
▪ Land	▪ Ecology
▪ Labor	▪ Equity
▪ Capital	▪ Economy

# Factors of Production

<b>Capitalism</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Ecological Economics</b>
▪ Land	▪ Ecology	▪ Natural Capital
▪ Labor	▪ Equity	▪ Social Capital
▪ Capital	▪ Economy	▪ Man-made Capital

# Commitments: Governments

1. Keep Equity front and centre in economic decision-making, and achieve rapid progress towards reducing inequality.
2. Move beyond GDP to a more holistic suite of indicators—one that takes account of the full range of benefits that actually accrue to us, while discounting the disbenefits that emerge from human enterprise.
3. Retract all fossil fuel subsidies and other subsidies that harm the environment, distort markets and create barriers to sustainable development.
4. Move to ensure that the full cost of resource extraction from the planetary commons (coal mining, oil and gas drilling, fracking) is borne by those profiting from the extraction, and not externalized onto the public domain.
5. Set up systems for decentralised and democratic planning of sustainable infrastructure.
6. Focus on Green Jobs and Decent Work, while phasing out “brown” jobs.
7. Give priority to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises in national planning, and move toward supporting businesses that become worker-owned and controlled.
8. Establish a global framework for corporate accountability.
9. Establish a Planetary Global Commons Management System that regulates the use of natural resources and waste
10. Implement the Contraction and Convergence model of growth, in which all countries shift their ecological footprint to sustainable levels. This implies that the richer countries shrink their ecological footprint, while developing nations stabilize theirs on a per capita basis, until all countries converge to an equitable footprint that is suitable for One Planet Living.

# Commitments: Business & Industry

1. Phase out unsustainable consumption and production practices.
2. Give priority to establishing “green” jobs and decent work.
3. Ensure full reporting on environmental and social issues.
4. Ensure the implementation of fair labour standards.
5. Phase in worker ownership and control.

# Commitments: Civil Society

1. Identify living examples of sustainable economies, create linkages across them to share experiences and increase learning, and campaign for removing political and economic barriers and creating enabling conditions for sustainable economies.
2. Work with knowledge institutions to develop coherent proposals for indicator systems capturing social and environmental wellbeing, and campaign to get governments to replace the GDP tyranny with these indicator systems.
3. Develop a shared understanding of harmful subsidies that is non-neoliberal and that incorporates the perspective of necessary safeguards for the poor and for environmental protection, and campaign for removal of harmful subsidies on this basis.
4. Campaign for a global system of corporate accountability.
5. Work closely with communities to strengthen their indigenous sustainable economies and to move toward improving wellbeing and prosperity for all.

# Ashwani Vasishth

[vasishth@ramapo.edu](mailto:vasishth@ramapo.edu)

Center for Sustainability  
Ramapo College of New Jersey