

Sustainability and Resilience

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Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs.

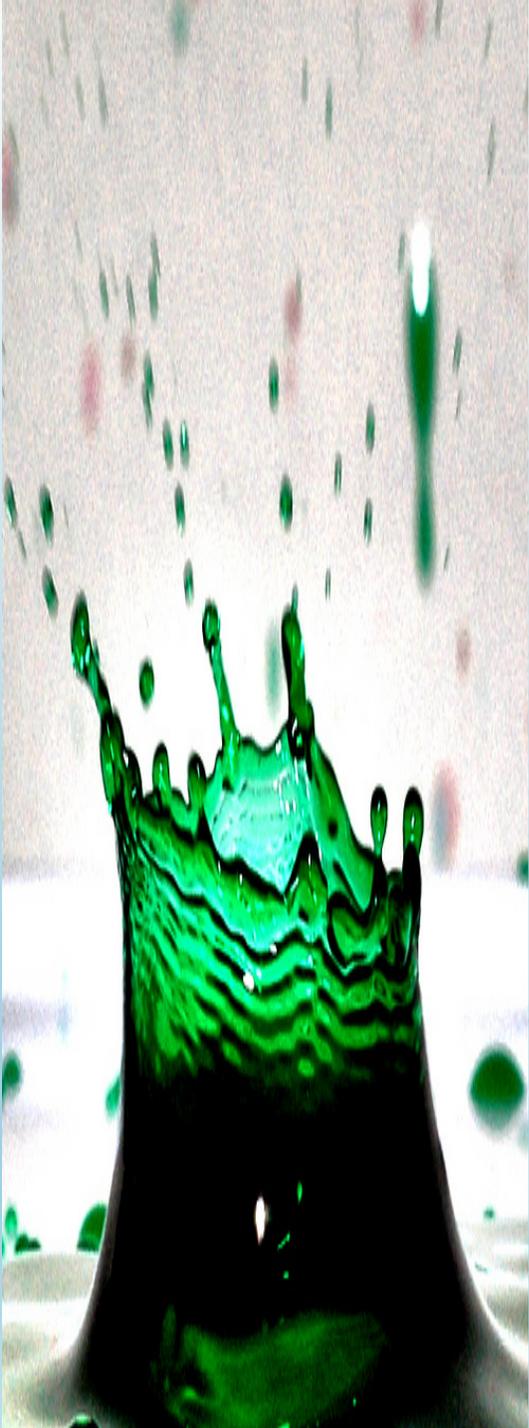
~The Brundtland Commission 1987
(WCED 1987)



“Sustainability is equity over time. As a value, it refers to giving equal weight in your decisions to the future as well as the present. You might think of it as extending the Golden Rule through time, so that you do onto future generations (as well as your present fellow beings) as you would have them do onto you.”

Robert Gilman, Director, Context Institute

Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks and the capacity to rise above difficult circumstances.



A global transition has begun,
and we are all part of it. Our
systems are poised and primed
for change.

“Our _____ system is a mess; it is failing us, our children, our future” – a catchphrase that can be completed with the words political, education, economic, courts or what else?

The current state of our world can be described as chaotic and ambiguous. Our systems are fighting change while being changed.

We've learned that there is no trust in government, no trust in business and no trust in our other institutions. This is a problem (with a hidden opportunity).

Current trends and events lay the foundation for a departure from the status quo. However, what we are changing into has not been determined.

Depending on how near-term environmental, political and social challenges are resolved, global development can branch into dramatically different pathways.

The Industrial Revolution was marked by law-governed institutions, market economies and scientific ingenuity.

It tapped into the human potential for innovation, acquisition and accumulation.

We teeter on the edge of the next revolution, perhaps in time called the Information Revolution or perhaps the Advanced Technology Revolution. It is grounded in the shared experiences and imagination of millennials and Gen Xers.

What has changed that causes us to teeter on the edge of this opportunity?

New global governance mechanisms, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and international banks, have begun to supersede the power of nations.

China's pollution battle will boost efforts to fight carbon emissions globally as the country launches initiatives on carbon trading and electric vehicles, even as the U.S. disengages.

A growing Chinese middle class values sustainability and demands healthier, more sustainable and organic products.

International boundaries are not what they used to be. The global economy can be disrupted by national or regional financial happenings.

Globally connected information and communication technology penetrate to the developing countries, changing values and cultures (while triggering traditionalist backlash).

Big data and artificial intelligence are also changing the way the world works. Witness the Target advertisement congratulating someone on being pregnant before they had told anyone.

Companies are blurring the lines between work and not work. Look at Google, Apple and Epic.

The rise of crowdfunding is rewriting the way we fund and support startups. There is a vast pool of money that was never available previously

“9/11” was a rip in time that defined a “before” and “after,” a cultural short-circuit that revealed deep global fissures and interrupted complacent attitudes.

Major upheavals in financial markets have left society uncertain about how to manage such markets.

Alan Greenspan was famously quoted as saying that he had put too much faith in the self-correcting power of free markets and that he had failed to anticipate the self-destructive power of banks.

Increasing acceptance of individual lifestyle choices, including gay marriage (reflecting a broad change in cultural mores). This has required people to rethink the most basic ideas about love and family.

Partisan pettiness has come more and more to undermine effective governmental decision-making and even our belief in what government should do.

Growing evidence for global climate change and its effects has become increasingly difficult to ignore.

Storms of the century have happened several times over the first 17 years of this century.

Louisiana is finalizing a plan to move thousands of people from areas threatened by coastal erosion. The U.S.'s most aggressive response to climate-linked flooding calls for new building prohibitions, home buyouts and tax hikes on those who won't leave high-risk areas. The cost of buyouts and resettlements could total billions of dollars.

On Dec. 19, 2017, China announced a cap-and-trade program aimed at reducing coal use in power plants, a move poised to create the world's largest carbon market.

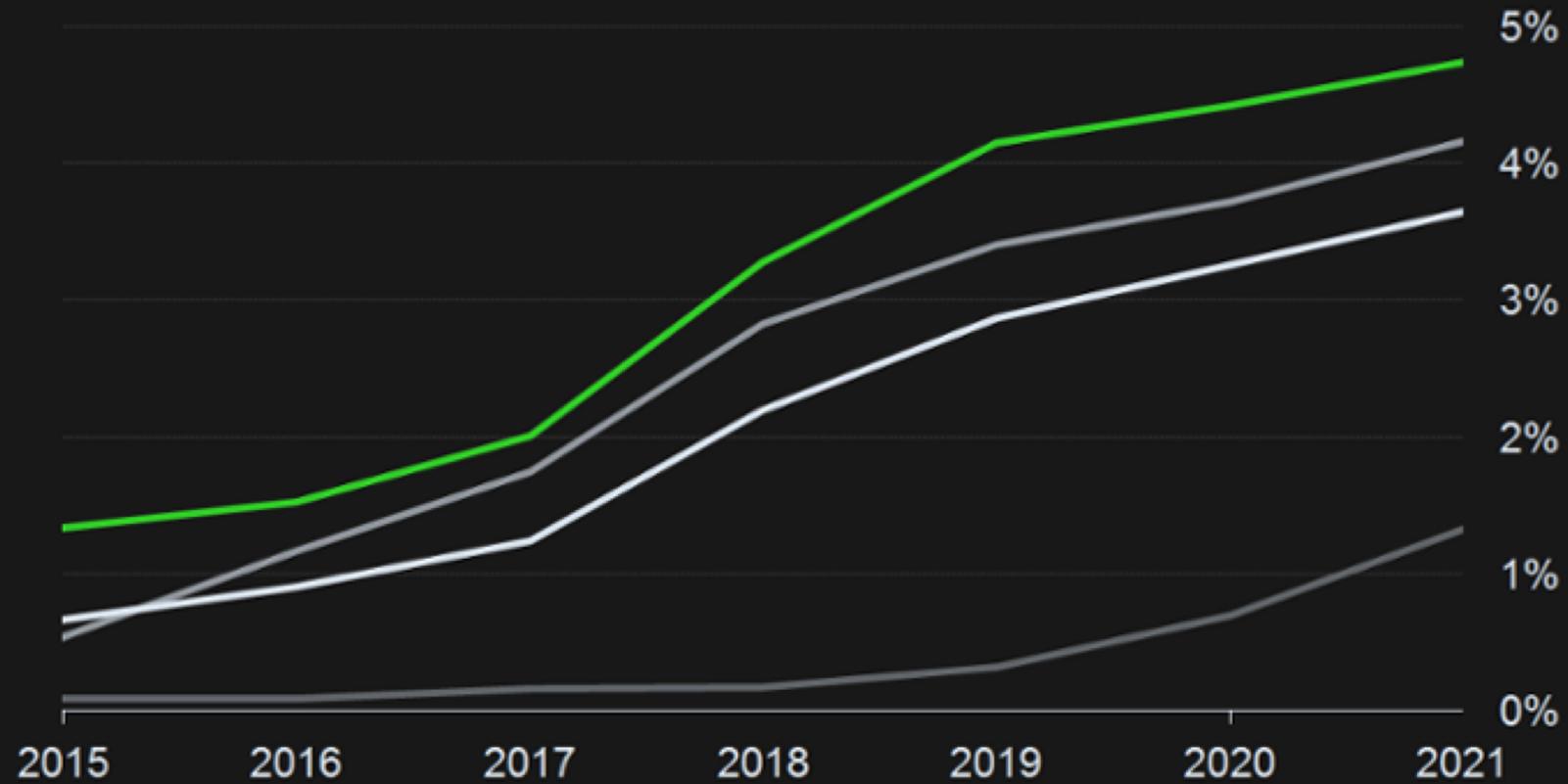
Cap-and-trade was a U.S. invention that was used to address the sulfur dioxide problem causing acid rain in the 1990s. The irony of China using this for carbon is that they have essentially imported a U.S. financial tool and modified it for their own purposes, while we in the U.S. have abandoned it and the Paris Agreement.

Electric vehicle adoption should grow as battery costs fall faster than expected and automakers increasingly commit to electric products. Global EV sales account for less than 2% of total sales, but surpassed 1 million for the first time in 2017.

DEMAND FOR ELECTRIC CARS SEEN ACCELERATING

EV % OF NEW CAR SALES

—REST OF THE WORLD —CHINA —U.S. —EUROPE



SOURCE: BLOOMBERG NEW ENERGY FINANCE

The Netherlands, India, China, Britain and France have all announced eventual ends to sales of vehicles with internal combustion engines.

The last time of great change was post WWII. My parents lived through that.

We enter now an era where great change can take place.

Most commentators suggest that it is the Millennials that will lead that change.

Mark Zuckerberg says “The biggest risk is not taking any risk... In a world that is changing quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks.”

The time to take risks is when you are young. This new generation is bold, unafraid of failure, and interested in changing the world.