



Working Group for Sustainable Change

MAKING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE A PRIORITY FOR AMERICA DURING THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

The US today is living well beyond it's means. With only 5% of the world's population, we consume more than a fourth of its natural resources. Yet with China's economy growing at 11% and India's at 9% each year, the demand for natural resources increasing rapidly around the world, and billions still lacking clean water, electricity, a good job or healthcare, this situation is clearly unsustainable.

Humanity, and particularly those most affluent, already consumes more than 130% of the earth's bio-capacity. Studies show we'll need two planets by 2030¹ to provide all of the natural resources we're expected to use. Global warming is just one among many global challenges and catastrophes threatening our future if we don't start living more sustainably. Sustainable Change is not just a good idea; it is an urgent necessity.

Sustainable Change connects many of Obama's existing positions across policy areas and is driven by an imperative to deliver a safe and prosperous future for our children. Americans are already investing in energy efficiency, renewables, and green building practices; communities and businesses are implementing sustainability plans; and we are increasingly buying green products and services. Now the Obama Administration needs to lead the way to a sustainable future.

The Working Group for Sustainable Change calls on the Obama Policy and Review Teams to recommend that the Obama Administration make Sustainable Change an explicit Organizing Principle within the Administration and federal government; and:

- Revitalize the economy by investing in Green Jobs and Infrastructure that will lead to a Sustainable America in all sectors - including energy, environmental protection and restoration, agriculture, water and sewers, sustainable production and consumption, green building practices, transportation, education, government and social services.
- Build on the work done by the President's Council on Sustainable Development² in the 1990s, the National Resource Sustainability Roundtables³, and many other efforts to develop and implement a National Strategy on Sustainability⁴, welcoming all Americans to join in a national dialogue about how we can create a sustainable future.
- Establish a Cabinet-level and/or White House Office on Sustainability that, along with an interagency committee(s), coordinates federal policies on energy, climate

¹ <http://www.panda.org/livingplanet> and www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/news_archive

² <http://clinton5.nara.gov/PCSD>

³ <http://www.sustainableforests.net/info.php#roundtables> and <http://acwi.gov/swrr>

⁴ <http://www.citnet.org/leadership/nssd.aspx> and <http://www.oecd.org/DATAOECD/34/10/2669958.PDF>



change, environmental protection, international relations and economic development, as well as promotes and supports integration of local, state and national initiatives.

- Encourage the growth of new industries that provide expanded capacity for addressing the energy, environmental, economic and social challenges we face.
- Invest in basic research and new technologies to stoke urban and rural economies; and use consistent standards, indicators, and incentives to encourage the marketplace to seek sustainably-produced goods and services and create a sustainable America.

In today's globalized economy, the United States must rejoin the world in addressing sustainable development and provide leadership in dealing with shared international problems. We call on the Policy and Review Teams to recommend that the Obama Administration:

- Take urgent action to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals⁵ – which includes integrating principles of environmental sustainability in national programs and policies.
- Take leadership to negotiate and ratify a strong U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change and support comprehensive global strategies to End Deforestation, Reduce Carbon Emissions, and Protect BioDiversity.
- Develop and implement a National Strategy on Sustainability and participate actively in the UN's Ten Year Framework on Sustainable Production and Consumption.⁶
- Participate in the International Decade on Education for Sustainable Development⁷ by integrating ESD in schools and the curriculum across America.

⁵ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals> and <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/environ.shtml>

⁶ <http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess> and <http://nasca.icspac.net>

⁷ <http://www.desd.org> and <http://www.uspartnership.org>