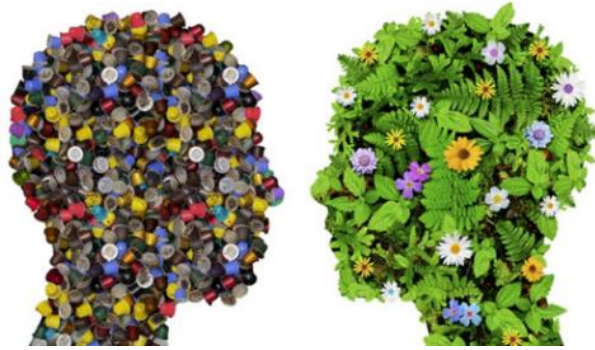


Align the economy sustainably



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The global economic system, with unbridled growth, and a barely controllable momentum by us humans, is increasingly endangering our natural basis of life and living together on earth.

We need to pave the way for sustainable economies *and* rethink our future economics on a Earth overflowing with people.

» Green Economy, Future City, Energy Transition - central systems of human coexistence have been identified, the transformations of which are of fundamental importance for the future viability of our way of life and economy.

Translated from: Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, Germany.

Sustainable development is hardly conceivable without a *consistent circular economy* and the simultaneous *reduction of over-consumption*. But turning away from a predominantly *linear* economy requires many political, economic and social decisions.

Reduce over-consumption



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More and more people in the rich countries realize how irresponsible and selfish we behave and what a large, *unpaid bill* we leave to our children and grandchildren.

The wearing out of nature through our consumption-oriented lifestyle is too great and endangers our basis of existence. We have to *rethink* our way of life and cut back on over-consumption.

Powerful status symbols determine our consumption behaviour.



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Big car

A big vehicle has always been considered a powerful status symbol. In the past, it was the pompous coaches of a few, then the Rolls-Royce of some, the American Chevrolet of many, and today the ever-bigger car of almost all people. Since 1980, the average weight of a car has doubled.

Large consumption of meat and fish

Since time immemorial, the consumption of meat has been a powerful status symbol. First, it was the feasting in the palaces of a few (over 200 years ago, in Europe, over 90% of all people generally had no meat to eat), then frequent food in expensive restaurants for the many, and, today, almost all people eat meat daily.

Per capita fish consumption has also doubled worldwide since 1960.

For 1 kg of beef about 33 square meters of agricultural land is required, for 1 kg of potatoes, however, only 0.3 square meters. No other consumer product in the world requires more land than the production of meat and milk. Although only 17 percent of humanity's calorie requirement is from animals, they need 77 percent of the global agricultural land.

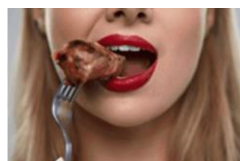
Large living space

Large living space has always been considered a powerful status symbol. It used to be the pompous castles of a few, then the spacious villas of some, the homes of many, and today the large apartments of almost all people.

In Switzerland, for example, each inhabitant occupies an average of 42 square metres of living space - twice as much as in 1965.

The construction of these residential buildings means a large consumption of resources and entails a large increase in energy consumption in heating and a large subsequent consumption, such as the purchase of furniture and many additional home furnishings.

All three status symbols have a big impact on our environment and climate.



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Apply clean and efficient technology



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Obsolete, polluting and inefficient productions must be rapidly replaced with new technologies.

However, we are falling for a great fallacy if we think that we can continue our lifestyle without change with increasing technological efficiency.

After all, the huge impact on our environment caused by our excessive consumption and rapid population growth can only be partially offset by technological improvements.

In addition, environmentally harmful activities should no longer be kept alive with the argument of keeping jobs.

Put digitalization at the service of global sustainability



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So far there is, figuratively, no algorithm to benefit us humans or algorithm to protect nature.

» The combination of digital progress and capitalist ideology in a fully monetarised society obviously leads to a concentration of power among a few, mostly private, actors [...].

However, digitalization has contributed as much as nothing to solving the really big problems [...]. Because normally only ideas that can be made into money come onto the market. But most urgent problems are problems that affect the poor.

Translated from: Jonas Lüscher, Writer - Interview in the newspaper Tages-Anzeiger, 06.01.2018

» Overall, digitalization processes today tend to act as «fire accelerants», exacerbating existing non-sustainable trends such as the overuse of natural resources and growing social inequality in many countries.

Towards our Common Digital Future. 2019. German Advisory Council on Global Change.

Redesign food system



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» Biodiversity is experiencing a dramatic, human-induced mass extinction worldwide [...] This also greatly reduces the capacity of ecosystems to contribute to *climate regulation* and *food security*.

Only if there is a fundamental change in the way we manage land can we reach the targets of climate-change mitigation, avert the dramatic loss of biodiversity and make the global food system sustainable.

German Advisory Council on Global Change WBGU. 2020. Rethinking Land in the Anthropocene: from Separation to Integration.

It therefore applies:

- **Change dietary**
Global dietary patterns need to converge around diets based more on plants.
- **Setting aside land for biodiversity**
More land needs to be protected and set aside for nature. It is the most effective way of preserving biodiversity.
- **Adapting the way we farm the land**
We need to farm in a more nature-friendly, biodiversity-supporting way.

According to: Tim G. Benton et al. Food system impacts on biodiversity loss. Three levers for food system transformation in support of nature. 2021.

We must act swiftly but keep a cool head. We need a prudent policy without *doomsday scenarios*, without *ideologies* and without *individual interests*.

Building blocks for sustainable development



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The building blocks for sustainable development mainly consist of the following adjustments to our way of living, which are all closely linked:

Source: Uwe Schneidewind. Die Grosse Transformation - Eine Einführung in die Kunst gesellschaftlichen Wandels.

- **Turnaround in prosperity and consumption**
The question is how sufficiency - a "Culture of Enough" - is possible and how the formation of such a culture can be supported by politics with the introduction of framework conditions.
- **Energy turnaround**
The goal of a revolution in our energy systems can only be achieved if the switch to renewable energy goes hand in hand with energy efficiency and energy sufficiency.
- **Resource turnaround**
Only if resource consumption per capita is reduced by a factor of 4 to 5 will humanity remain within planetary boundaries in the long term.
- **Mobility turnaround**
The change in mobility is closely linked to the energy turnaround and the resource turnaround and therefore needs more than just technological developments.
- **Nutrition turnaround**
Today's food production is responsible for an important share of the burdens placed on global resources as well as CO₂ pollution. 30% of consumer-related environmental impacts in Europe are caused by our eating habits. Our consumption of meat and fish needs to be significantly reduced.
- **Urban turnaround**
By the middle of this century, around 80% of the world's population will be living in cities. The nature of urban development is therefore of central importance for sustainable development as a whole.
- **Industrial turnaround**
Two goals are paramount here: Decarbonisation [CO₂ - emissions stopping] and the recycling economy. This requires technological innovation, cooperation, and an innovative policy framework.

How urgent is it?



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» **It is very urgent. System collapse is a real danger.** (...) We face tremendous challenges due to rapid population growth, the overuse of resources and associated pollution, the loss of biodiversity, and overall we are experiencing a gradual loss of our basis of existence.

Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker and Anders Wijkman - Come on! 2017

The *Limits to Growth* report to the Club of Rome in **1972** dealt with the future of the world economy and, at that time, voiced the grim forecast according to which

» the absolute **limit of growth** on Earth will be reached within the next hundred years if the current increase in world population, industrialisation, pollution, food production, and the exploitation of natural resources continue unabated.

Time is running out

Environmental and climate protection will probably achieve a breakthrough only if the pressure from below - from us citizens - on politicians and decision-makers increases.

The question is not *how*?

The question is, *when* do we start to live sustainably?

