Sustainable development and Climate Change
Have we failed or is there some hope?

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Sustainable Development

- Harmonious integration of a sound and viable economy, responsible governance, people's empowerment, social cohesion and **ecological integrity -** Osman-Elasha

Hurricane Sandy –> the new normal – What happened to sustainable development??

Atlantic City, NJ

Over 110 people died in the US last week due to Sandy.

8 million customers lost power

NEW YORK

The City and the Storm

Fires in Queens, NY

But what about Haiti – 90% of their crops are gone

And just a week later: Nor' Eastern - nothing extreme, but cumulate effect with Sandy is devastating
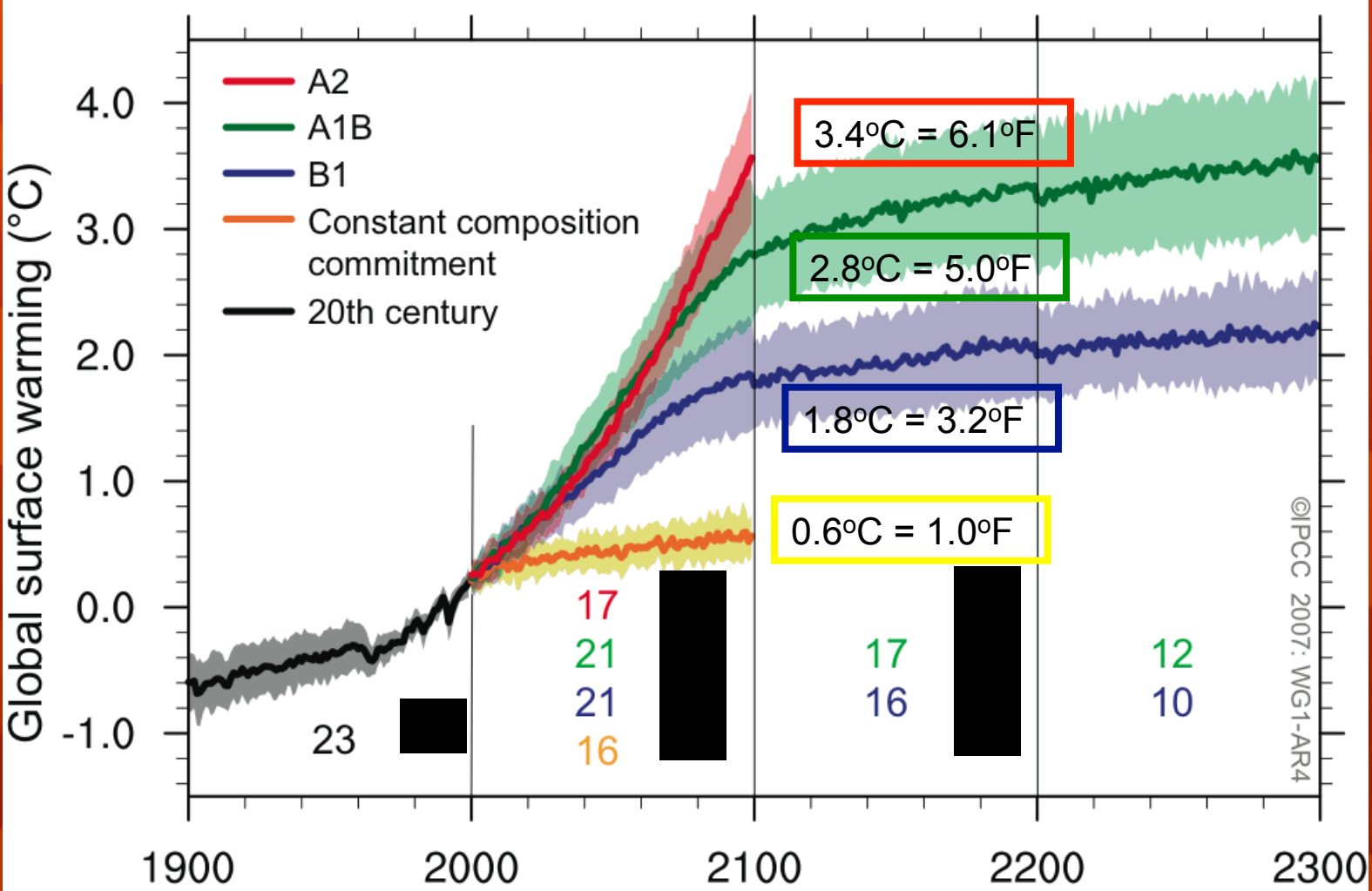
- The **science** tells us that more extreme weather follows the pattern of a changing climate
- Risk management and **resilience** will be important - reacting to extreme weather will not lead us on a path to sustainable development –
Adaptation is crucial

- Climate change is a constraint on development

What is in the pipeline and what could come

Warming will increase if GHG increase.   If GHG were kept fixed at current levels, a committed 0.6°C of further warming would be expected by 2100.   More warming would accompany more emission.

Let's keep it simple!

- Video on climate variability and change as illustrated by a man walking a dog. Owner is the long term trend, the dog is the variation around the trend. The owner represents the climate, the dog represents the weather. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0vj-0imOLw&feature=youtu.be

CONNECTION BETWEEN CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Climate change will eventually wipe out all progress made toward sustainable development, through impacts, such as, sea level rise [think: Bangladesh under water] and an increase in extreme weather events [think: Sandy].

- Had we taken sustainable development seriously already in 1992, we would not be facing the mess we have now.

- sustainable development is a key to capacities for mitigation and adaptation to climate change

- We have the legal tools and the technology, what is missing is the **political will** *and* recognizing that **misinformation** has stopped us from taking action sooner.

The Big Picture/Real Solutions

- Balance the sustainable use of natural resources and with eradication of poverty/ improvement of standard of living.

- States have the sovereign right to use their natural resources as they decide yet ALSO according to Rio Declaration Principle 2 the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction do not cause damage to the environment of other States or the global commons.

- The answer lies in transformation of the economy to a low carbon economy - institutional reform, new legislation and law enforcement, holistic CSR, and education.

Developed vs. Developing Nations

▸ Developed/industrialized nations are trying to find solutions to environmental issues.
- On the other hand, Developing nations (focusing on poverty eradication) encourage and need   development.

▸ "The pursuit of sustainable development is particularly damaging for poorer countries because of the support that it provides for protectionist policies." – Wilfred Beckerman

▸ Issues:
  ◦ Restrict imports from developing nations because they
  ◦ are not preserving their environment. The other side =
  ◦ Unfairly subsidize our exports to them.

What's the solution/balance? Economic incentives to take the sustainable path.

Developed vs. Developing Nations

- Agenda 21 (1992) – "the major cause of continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable patters of consumption and production, particularly in the industrialized countries."

- "Sharing knowledge and providing financial assistance to developing countries ensnared with dangerous and outdated technology should take priority."

- Weiss: "No one country or even group of countries has the capability to protect the environment over time by its own efforts alone." Nations need to cooperate - MORE

Intra-generational equity

We cannot wait for poverty to be eradicated before addressing environmental and social problems

e.g. China is choking on its own pollution already

Need to address economic development at the same time as environmental and social problems

 = sustainable development for today's generation

This is intra-generational equity

- Sustainable development does not mean economic stagnation or giving up economic growth for the sake of the environment

- Economic development leads to increased capacity to address environmental and social problems.

We don't need to move to this

Limits to growth? (e.g. China)

Inter-generational equity
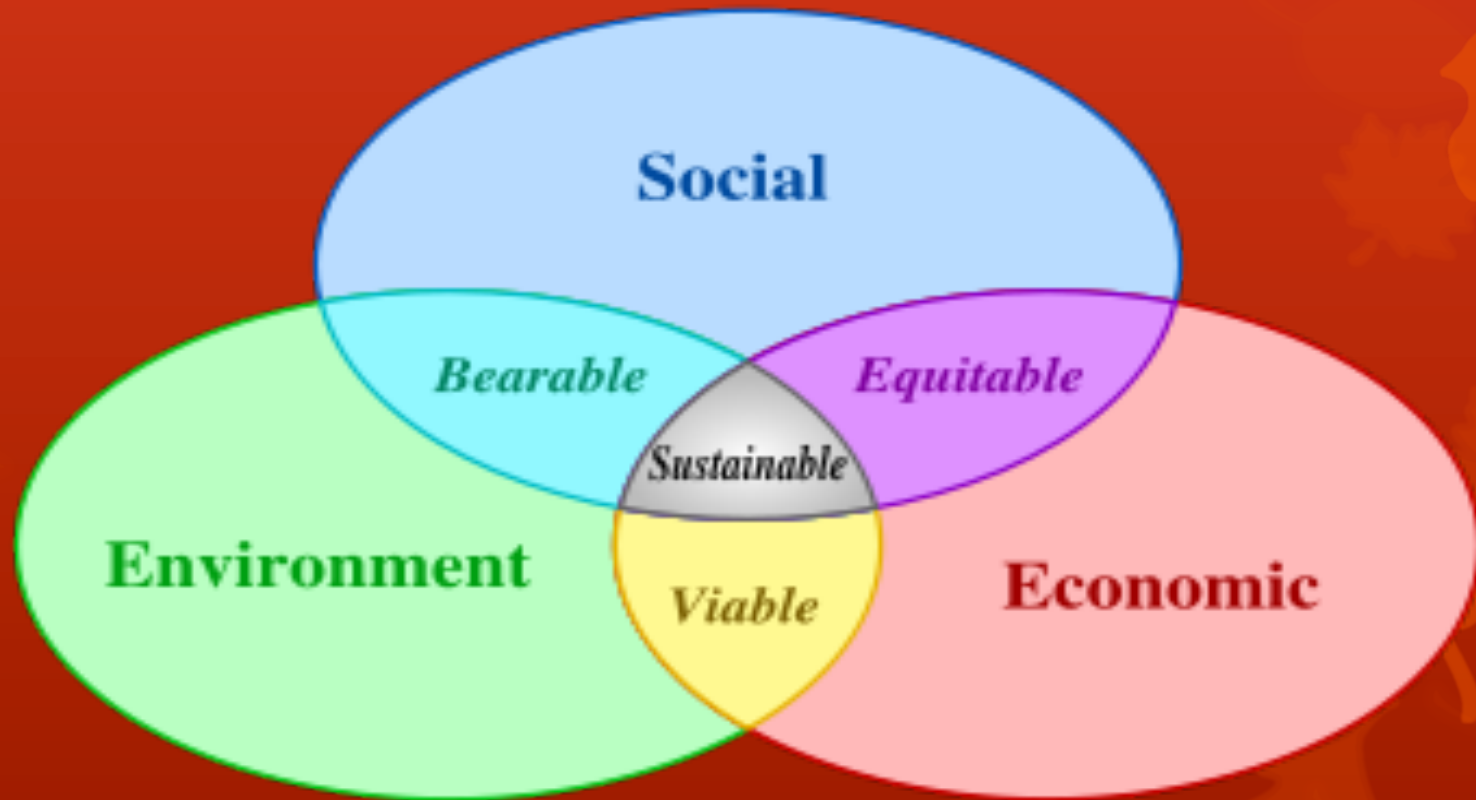## Short term and long term approaches

- "In some people an excessive concern with future generations is the counterpart of indifference to the suffering of people alive today." - Wilfred Beckerman – also see Bjørn Lomborg

- We need to address both issues **simulataneously** = intergenerational equity

How do we know what future generations need?

Two types of sustainability:

- - Strong sustainability – future generations need capital consisting of natural capital - at least ecosystems that are constant–and 'human-made' capital

- - Weak sustainability – as long as capital is passed on to the next generation, no need to have natural capital

- - Some say there are no objective facts about which type of economic activity is sustainable in the long term – based on beliefs - possibilities of substitution and technical progress. Yet, based on **science** we know we need to maintain ecosystem services, one of which is the atmosphere's capacity to absorb CO_2 affecting the climate – hence we need to reduce emissions to maintain the climate system and avoid dangerous climate change

This is still viable

Multilateral Corporations and CSR

○ Corporations – the engines of the global economy. Often not made social and environmental issue a priority, especially in developing countries

○ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)– addressing sustainable development beyond the law

○ Ruggie Principles (UN Guiding Principles on Businees and Human Rights) are a good model for human rights, now we the need equivalent on the environmental side of the triangle.

○ Sustainable Companies Project – decision-making in a corporation not just focused on profit, but also sustainable development.

CSR and social media instant information sharing

- CSR implemented at the highest and lowest level of the company – not a static issue –

- Using social media to exchange information with all the stakeholders of the company – internally and externally– make it part of the transparency and reporting requirements – dynamic approach.

- The slick PR pages in the annual reports – will then be supplemented by effective efforts to internalize their impacts on the environment and society.

In conclusion:

- We need to radically change the economy to focus on climate change as it effects sustainable development – move to a low carbon economy

- States need agree to an international treaty addressing the 2 degree gap way before 2015 – Durban Platform

- Many businesses are becoming aware of the problem, but governments need to level the playing field - Long-term policy support for renewable technology deployment has been lacking in many countries

- Media must search out the funding of ads claiming *There's no compelling scientific argument for drastic action to 'decarbonize' the world's economy. 'Opinion' WSJ*

- Addressing climate change is imperative, if we don't address it now sustainable development will not be possible for us or future generations.

- Rio Declaration 1992 - http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm
- AGENDA 21
  - http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21.htm
- 2002 New Dehli Principles on Sustainable Development http://www.cisdl.org/pdf/new_delhi_declaration.pdf
- Ruggie Principles: http://www.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/ruggie/ruggie-guiding-principles-21-mar-2011.pdf
- Sustainable Companies Project: http://www.jus.uio.no/ifp/english/research/projects/sustainable-companies/