



Editorial

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Sustainability in Debate releases its 5th issue at a very special moment: just a few days after the closing of the **Rio+20 – United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**, which took place in June, in Rio de Janeiro. Two decades after Rio-92, a fair amount of the issues discussed in that event continued to be of interest, and some of them were became more serious since then. Many things, however, have changed since then. The world population increased by the equivalent of the current population of China and Brazil (1.45 billion). Deforestation affected an area equivalent to Argentina, generating loss of biodiversity and contributing to climate disturbances. Today, more than half of the planet's population live in cities, whereas 800 million people do not have minimum housing conditions (GEO 5 - PNUMA¹).

Between 1992 and 2012, climatic variables worsened and became increasingly evident, as many regions of the planet suffered from frequent extreme events. The very concept of sustainable development, which was still something remote and poorly understood by most people, has become notorious and reached a certain maturity. If in 1992 the concept of sustainability had to be explained, today it is necessary to identify the merely rhetorical uses of the concept and separate them from responsible practices.

When it hosted the Rio-92 summit, Brazil had recently put an end to 21-years period of military dictatorship. Serious problems polarized the discussions, and environmental issues were of secondary concern. A stagnant economy, growing urban violence, baffling social and regional inequalities, and a certain carelessness about the deforestation of the Amazon region placed Brazil in an uneasy situation.

Now, Brazil and the world are changed. The Brics² group, formed by the so-called emerging countries, when compared to those days, has attained an unanticipated international visibility and a position of leadership. On account of their great economic drive, these countries stand in contrast to those nations that had dominated the world scenario since the end of World War II.

In 1992 negotiations were affected by a feeling that everything (or almost everything) could be blamed on the bad conduct of rich countries. In the 21st century, the world has become increasingly integrated, with China's industrial growth, the remarkable expansion of Brazilian agri-business, and the re-allocation of transnational companies throughout many economic centers. There remain differences regarding who benefits from a number of improvements, but there is also a greater and more complex territorialization of the degradation of nature.

In the Stockholm Conference, in 1972, the idea that environmental quality was a variable internal to each country still prevailed. Today, the challenge is to uphold the inescapable findings that the Earth is but a spaceship in which we live and that its status interests everyone. Problems generated in any region of the planet can cross borders, making it clear that they must be debated and settled on a global scale, by societies and by their leaders.

This brings into question topics such as the ecological footprint left by each country and each individual, and the leakage of CO₂ inherent to the re-allocation of productive activities without the necessary changes in consumption patterns.

Another recurring topic which polarized discussion in the Rio+10 Conference (Johannesburg, 2002) was: Is it possible to expect sustainable development if it is not based on social justice and the reduction of extreme poverty? Another important topic came up now: How to deal with a green economy, with paradigm changes in production and energy generation, when the richest nations of the Planet are suffering from an economic crisis? Certainly, a mere meeting of leader, lasting just a few days, would not lead to the resolution of all of these challenges. It is always good to celebrate advancements, but it is of fundamental importance to record setbacks.

Rio + 20's final document, entitled **The Future We Want**, was rejected by civil society organizations and was booed at the very moment it was announced. The content of the document is a long list of promises that suggest steps towards a "green economy", the reduction of environmental degradation, the alleviation of poverty, and the reduction of inequalities. However, the origins of financial resources and the means to bring about these changes were not defined. This was a replay of the major problem with the Rio-92 documents: The lack of concrete goals and of commitment by national leaders. This led NGOs to demand the withdrawal of the passage that stated that the document had been drafted with the support of civil society.

The results of the Rio+20 summit show that society is willing and ready to make the necessary changes, but these new perspectives are still resisted by conservative governments.

Other recent setbacks refer to the passing of two great participants in the debates about sustainability. First, there was the loss of **Elinor Ostrom**, the first woman to receive an Nobel Prize in Economics (2009). Professor at the University of Indiana since 1965, Ostrom wrote a large number of texts in which she demonstrates how common resources – forests, fishing stocks, pastures – can be successfully managed by their users, dispensing the need of governments or businesses.

Armando Dias Mendes, a native of the Brazilian Amazon region, also died recently. He had an important role as vice-dean in the Federal University of Para and as member of the Federal Education Council. His contribution was remarkable in the fields of education, Amazonian studies, and sustainable regional development. Amongst his many qualities, Mendes wrote with a poetic verve and always kept his good humor.

Sustainability in Debate acknowledges and is grateful for the support given by Brazil's **Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada (IPEA)**. Our journal was awarded with financial resources, by means of a bidding process targetted at Brazilian journals in the area of human sciences. These resources will be used to renew the graphic design of our journal and its site, besides allowing new procedures in communications, editing, copy-editing and composition.

In its 5th issue, *Sustainability in Debate* starts a new section: **Opinion**. It will publish current thoughts and texts of renowned authors. Our readers will find in this section two important recent statements, presented during the **Pugwash Workshop: Science and Social Responsibility: Rising Problems, Wise Initiatives**, which took place at the UNESCO headquarters, in Paris, in March 2012. The **Pugwash Conferences** exist since 1957. They resulted from a statement made by Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell, alerting about the dangers of nuclear weapons. The conferences seek to promote world peace. Nothing more essential to the debates on sustainability...

The first statement is entitled *Science, Ethics and Social Responsibility*, delivered by Jennifer Allen Simons, president of **The Simons Foundation**. She discusses the changing roles of science and technology and whether the dangers associated with them have surpassed the benefits that they deliver. The second statement is called *Good prospects: uncertainty and the responsible governance of Earth as a system*, by Arthur Petersen. He is chief-scientist of the **PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency** and Special Professor of the **University Amsterdam**. He proposes a broad interpretation of the ‘uncertainty’ of the future of the Earth and discusses how to obtain a pleasant and responsible existence for everyone, while preserving all the good things our planet has to offer to current society and to future generations.

Our **Articles** section contains five texts. The first is entitled *The Jari Project Managed by The Orsa Group: Corporate Social Responsibility Applied to the Amazon Context*, by Anna Greissing. It results from a recent doctoral dissertation thesis presented jointly at **the universities Paris 3 and Innsbruck**. The article examines a highly relevant Brazilian subject: the adventure of natural resource extraction in the state of Amapá, in the Brazilian Amazon region, by the famous Jari Project, reborn in the 21st century, under new management.

A second article is *Programas de pagamento por serviços (PSA) como instrumento de política para o desenvolvimento territorial sustentável*, by Jorge Amaral de Moraes. It provides a brief theoretical discussion about the topic of payments for environmental services, describes the main traits of relevant Brazilian programs, and evaluates the perspectives of the **Protetor das Águas** project, which is being executed in Vera Cruz county, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

The third article - *Produção de cimento impactos à saúde e ao meio ambiente* – was written by Maria Beatriz Maury and Raquel Naves Blumenschein. It focuses on the production of cement and its impacts on human health and on the environment, dealing specifically with the Queima Lençol Community, located near a cement factory in Brazil’s Federal District.

The fourth article is called *O processo de comercialização do turismo de base comunitária no Brasil: desafios, potencialidades e perspectivas*, written by Ivan Bursztyrn and Roberto Bartholo. It discusses the matter of access to markets, outlining strategic guidelines for the process of commercialization of community-based tourism ventures, initiatives and itineraries.

The fifth article is entitled *Educação e desenvolvimento sustentável: a expansão do ensino superior na região metropolitana do Cariri*, written by Polliana Luna N. Barreto, Suely Salgueiro Chacon and Verônica Salgueiro do Nascimento. It deals with the recent expansion of undergraduate university programs in Brazil, focusing on the Cariri region, in the state of Ceará, in Brazil’s northeast region, and on the possible effects of this expansion for the region’s development.

Our **Debate** section publishes a text called *Vandana Shiva e o mundo atual*, based on an interview with the famous Indian scientist and activist. It summarizes the main points of a public presentation she made at a national book fair held in Brasília, in April of 2012. The text was organized by the event's moderator, the Brazilian journalist **Jaime Sautchuk**.

Our **Interview** section brings the expectations of **José Eli da Veiga** about the Rio+ 20 summit. The interview was conducted by **Saulo Rodrigues Filho**, professor of the Center for Sustainable Development, of the Universidade de Brasília.

This issue has five **Book Reviews**:

Bioetanol: mantendo a liderança, on the book *Bioetanol de cana-de-açúcar: P&D para produtividade e sustentabilidade*, edited by *Luís Augusto Barbosa*. Reviewed by **Núbia Moura Ribeiro**.

A pegada humana: uma história ambiental, on the book *The Human Footprint: A Global Environmental History*, written by Anthony N. Penna. Reviewed by **Rafael D'Almeida Martins**,

Um valor incalculável, on the book *O Valor das Florestas*, edited by Marco Antonio Fujihara, Roberto Cavalcanti, Andre Guimarães and Rubens Garlipp. Reviewed by **Luciana de Oliveira Rosa Machado**.

A História da terra e do homem no Planalto Central: eco-história do Distrito Federal, written by Paulo Bertran. Reviewed by **Kelerson Semerene Costa**.

Um futuro para a Amazônia, written by Bertha Becker and Claudio Stenner. Reviewed by **Gloria Maria Vargas**.

Recommended Reading focuses on the book *Mundo sustentável 2 – novos rumos para um planeta em crise*, written by André Trigueiro. **Books Received** has a list of books sent to us by Brazilian publishing houses.

We invite the scientific community to submit their texts to *Sustainability in Debate* and to register as possible referees. This can be done at <www.revista.sustentabilidade.debate> Also, publishers who seek to have their books reviewed by us can send review copies to Campus Universitário Darcy Ribeiro - Gleba A, Bloco C - Av. L3 Norte, Asa Norte - Brasília-DF, CEP: 70.904-970 (Junto ao Centro de Excelência em Turismo - CET) Telefones: 55(61) 3107-6000, 3107-6001, 3107-6002, Fax: 3107-5972

Good reading to all!

Notes

¹ See http://www.unep.org/geo/pdfs/geo5/GEO5_report_full_en.pdf (accessed on June 6, 2012).

² Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.