



# Understanding Sustainable Development - AGENDA 21 -

## A Guide for Public Officials

Prepared by

**Freedom 21**  
*Santa Cruz*

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**Table of Contents:**

**What Is Sustainable Development? ..... 4**  
    Historical Development and Origins  
    The Antithetical Foundations of Liberty  
        and Sustainable Development

**Implementing Sustainable Development ..... 8**  
    Equity: using the law to restructure human nature  
    Economy: the international redistribution of wealth and  
        the creation of public-private partnerships  
    Environment: nature above man  
    Educating the Youth to Mold the Minds of Tomorrow  
    Stakeholder Councils –  
        Restructuring American Government  
    Funding Sources  
    Political Support

**Sustainable Development Programs ..... 17**  
    The Wildlands Project  
    Smart Growth

**What Can You Do? ..... 21**  
    5 Practical Steps You Can Take to Restore  
        and Protect Liberty

# Introduction

You may have heard people talking about Sustainable Development – in public meetings, on television and on the radio. Consultants talk about it, university professors lecture on it, and at various levels of government, it may even be mandated. But what *is* Sustainable Development?

That is precisely the question this Guide is intended to address. In the following pages, you will read of the origins of Sustainable Development, its theoretical underpinnings, its major programs, and the means by which it is implemented.

When you have finished reading this document, you will have the knowledge necessary to begin identifying the vast array of Sustainable Development programs that arise.

Please recognize this document for what it is: a unique opportunity to learn more about Sustainable Development, and to make a difference in your community by supporting present and future actions that restore and protect the rights and well-being of your family, your fellow citizens, and you.

More information on the nature and consequences of Sustainable Development is available from Freedom 21 Santa Cruz.

# What Is Sustainable Development?

The most common definition of Sustainable Development given by its proponents is a statement found in the Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future*, released during the 1987 United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development:

**“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”**

## Historical Development and Origins

Even the term “sustainable” must be defined, since on the surface it appears to be inherently positive. In reality, Sustainable Development has become a “buzz” term that refers to a political agenda, rather than an objectively sustainable form of development. Specifically, it refers to an initiative of the United Nations (U.N.) called the U.N. Sustainable Development Agenda 21, the most comprehensive statement of a political ideology that is being progressively infused into every level of government in America.

Known around the world simply as Agenda 21, this initiative is “a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally, and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts (sic) on the environment.”<sup>1</sup>

Agenda 21 was unveiled in 1992 during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), commonly

1. <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/index.htm>



*Image 1: The United Nations website clearly displays Agenda 21 documents*

known as the Rio Earth Summit, where more than 178 nations adopted Agenda 21, and pledged to evaluate progress made in implementing the plan every five years thereafter. President George H. W. Bush was the signatory for the United States.

Although Congress never authorized the implementation of Agenda 21<sup>2</sup> (as a soft-law policy recommendation<sup>3</sup> – not a treaty – it needs no ratification), in 1993,

President Bill Clinton established, by Executive

Order, the President’s Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) for the purpose of implementing Agenda 21 in the United States. The

2. Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) submitted a resolution (H.J. Res. 166) to the 103rd Congress on March 29, 1993 urging the President, and Congress to “assume a strong leadership role in implementing the decisions made at the Earth Summit by developing a national strategy to implement Agenda 21 and other Earth Summit agreements...” Though that bill stalled in the Subcommittee on Economic Policy, Trade and Environment, its recommendations have been implemented through various actions by the President, and Congress.

3. “Soft law” policy is not binding. This is a common procedure in the U.N.’s policy development strategy. “Soft law” documents are quite often followed by treaties or covenants, which are binding international law; alternately, soft law can find immediate application through local legislation or policy without an internationally binding agreement.

PCSD operated through 1999, but its actions to promote Sustainable Development have taken root, and now exert an increasing influence in communities across America.

International organizations such as the U.N., and its accredited Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), generally consider Sustainable Development and Agenda 21 to be synonymous. Therefore, in order to avoid confusion and equivocation, Sustainable Development will be the term used throughout this document to refer to both. Agenda 21 will only be used to refer to the actual document from the Rio Earth Summit.

At times, the political agenda embodied in Sustainable Development is implemented under other names for purposes of political expediency. J. Gary Lawrence, a planner for the city of Seattle, and advisor to the President's Council on Sustainable Development, said in 1998, that, "*Participating in a UN advocated planning process would very likely bring out many ... who would actively work to defeat any elected official ... undertaking Local Agenda 21. So we will call our process something else, such as "comprehensive planning," "growth management," or "strategic growth."*"<sup>4</sup>

## **The Antithetical Foundations of Liberty and Sustainable Development**

**"Property must be secured, or liberty cannot exist."**

– *John Adams*

It has long been known that liberty is tied to the institution of private property. The Decalogue codified private property in four words: "Thou shalt not steal."

**"Private property and freedom are inseparable."**

– *George Washington*

4. Lawrence, J. Gary, The Future of Local Agenda 21 in the New Millennium, The Millennium Papers, UNED-UK, Issue 2, (1998), 3.

These intuitions were understood by those who participated in the American experiment<sup>5</sup> and were consequently included in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.<sup>6</sup> The right to property as outlined in those documents is premised on an owner's determination of its use, provided that such use does not disturb the equal rights of another.

**"...all Men...are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."**

*– The Declaration of Independence*

In contrast to the unalienable rights found in America's founding documents, the United Nations Charter and the Declaration of Human Rights are based on a very different idea: rights are granted and rescinded by men.

The Sustainable Development political agenda originates in the founding documents of the United Nations. This isn't surprising, since the myriad countries represented in the drafting of Agenda 21 have widely divergent forms of government, and must have a point of agreement (a "least common denominator") to rally around – and the U.N. Charter provides that point. However, for progress to be made in implementing Sustainable Development in the United States, unalienable rights such as the right to property must be eroded, attacked, and struck down altogether.<sup>7,8</sup>

5. Soapes, Emily Williams. "The American Experiment: Living with the Constitution." Prologue: Journal of the National Archives 19, no.3 (Fall 1987): 185-189.

6. See also Machan, Tibor, Private Rights & Public Illusions, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick (1995).

7. Nullification of the right to the reasonable use of one's property affects by extension the right to private action and the freedom of expression. Shaw, Michael, What is Private Property? Liberty Garden (2003).

8. Heywood, V.H. (ed.). Global Biodiversity Assessment. United Nations Environment Programme. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1995): 767, 782. This document likewise condemns "inappropriate social structures" (p 763), golf courses (p 970), and the attitudes toward nature found in "Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions" (pp 766, 838).

# Implementing Sustainable Development

The authors of Agenda 21 have said it will affect every area of life, grouped according to three objectives: Equity, Economy, and Environment (known commonly as “the 3 E’s”). By defining these terms vaguely, a litany of abuse has resulted. Furthermore, by rubber-stamping pre-conceived plans, using manipulative “visioning” sessions to garner the appearance of public buy-in, and acquiring grants from sources with questionable motives, the entire process of implementing Sustainable Development policies is suspect.

## **Equity: using the law to restructure human nature**

The authors of the Sustainable Development action plan recognized that their environmental and economic objectives, and the corresponding transformation of the American system of justice, are radically divergent from the views and objectives of the average person. Therefore, in order to achieve their objectives, they call for a shift in attitudes, which can be seen in the educational programs developed by its proponents. This is the premise of Sustainable Development: That individual human wants, needs, and desires are to be conformed to the views and dictates of planners. Harvey Ruvin, Vice Chair of the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), and Clerk of the Circuit and County Court in Miami-Dade County, Florida, has said that “*individual ights will have to take a back seat to the collective*” in the process of implementing Sustainable Development.<sup>9</sup>

9. Peros, Joan, unpublished report, UNCED Rio+10 Summit – Johannesburg, South Africa (2002).

## **Economy: the international redistribution of wealth and the creation of public-private partnerships**

**“...current lifestyles and consumption patterns of the affluent middle class – involving high meat intake, use of fossil fuels, appliances, home and work air conditioning, and suburban housing are not sustainable.”**

– *Mau ice St ong,*  
*Sec eta y Gene al, U.N. Confe ence on Envi onment and*  
*Development, 1992. (Also known as the*  
*Rio Ea th Summit, whe e Agenda 21 was unveiled.)*

According to its preamble, “The developmental and environmental objectives of Agenda 21 will require a substantial flow of new and additional financial resources to developing countries.” Language throughout Agenda 21 erroneously assumes that life is a zero-sum game (the wealth of the world was made at the expense of the poor, making them even poorer). This critique of economic ills denies the ingenuity of private action, individual determination, and free market innovation, and leads inevitably to the conclusion that if the conditions of the poor are to be improved, wealth must be taken from the rich. Sustainable Development embodies this unjust redistribution of wealth both in theory and in implementation, effectively lowering the standard of living in America to that of the rest of the world. The Draft Covenant on Environment and Development states in Article 8: “...equity will be achieved through implementation of the international economic order ... and through transfers of resources to developing countries...”

In addition to its appeal for the international redistribution of wealth, Sustainable Development is actually restructuring the economy, molding it not on private enterprise, but on public-private partnerships.

Public-private partnerships bring businesses desiring the protection offered by government's legalized force together with government agents that want the power that comes with economic control. The power of economics, and the force of government, must serve as a check and balance on each other; combining the two will ultimately result in tyranny. Free enterprise is lost amid subsidies, incentives, tax-breaks, and insider privilege, and with it goes the notion that the customer is the final determiner of how resources are allocated in production. The Sustainable Development "partnerships" involve some corporations – domestic and multinational – some tax-exempt family foundations, select individuals, and collectivist politicians and their administrations. Of these participants, only elected politicians are accountable to the public for their actions.

## **Environment: nature above man**

Americans support laws and regulations that are designated to effectively prevent pollution of the air, water, or the property of another. Yet, it is increasingly clear that Sustainable Development uses the environment simply as the means to promote a political agenda. For example, Al Gore says that Sustainable Development will bring about "a wrenching transformation" of American society.<sup>10</sup>

Sustainable Development is ostensibly concerned with the environment; it is more concerned with restructuring the governmental system of the world's nations so that all the people of the world will be the subjects of a global collective. Many of its proposed implementation strategies require the surrender of unalienable rights.

10. "Minor shifts in policy, marginal adjustments in ongoing programs, moderate improvements in laws and regulations, rhetoric offered in lieu of genuine change – these are all forms of appeasement, designed to satisfy the public's desire to believe that sacrifice, struggle, and a wrenching transformation of society will not be necessary." Gore, Al, *Earth in the Balance*. Plume (1993): 274.

This fact alone casts a serious shadow of doubt on the motives of Sustainable Development planners who would discard the unalienable rights to life, liberty, and property in order to pursue dubious programs.<sup>11</sup> When Sustainable Development is implemented, ordinary people will be left unprotected from *de facto* decrees placing nature above man, while relegating man to the status of a “biological resource.”<sup>12</sup>

## **Educating the Youth to Mold the Minds of Tomorrow**

**“All who have meditated  
on the art of governing mankind  
have been convinced that the fate of empires  
depends on the education of youth.”**

*– A istotle*

One means that Sustainable Developers have to ensure continuing support of their anti-human programs is through molding the minds of the next generation. Chapter 25 of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 21 calls for the need to “enlist and empower children and youth in reaching for sustainability.”

Even a cursory look at the federally-mandated curriculum being taught in classrooms in every government school in America would show that the doctrines of Sustainable Development are finding their way into every subject. French classes are used to teach students to “save the earth;” economics classes feature lectures discouraging individual initiative in the marketplace and decrying private ownership; history classes obscure the importance of America’s founding documents; mandatory “service-learning” programs enlist students to work for government-approved Sustainable Development

11. cf. Taylor, Jerry, Sustainable Development: A Dubious Solution in Search of a Problem, Cato Institute (2002).

12. Bureau of Land Management, Internal Working Document for ecosystem management, (March 1994).

partner organizations. The list goes on and on.

While taxpayers foot the bill for the increasing costs of government education, parents are increasingly shut out of decisions crucial to the molding of their child's mind. Controversial programs designed for "values clarification" are being performed in government schools that employ "powerful behavior control techniques and peer pressure to make [a] developing child question his or her individual worth and values," and are designed to disrupt parental oversight in the upbringing of their children, according to Professor of Organizational Behavior, Brent Duncan.<sup>13</sup>

## **Stakeholder Councils – Restructuring American Government**

**I believe there are more instances  
of the abridgement of the freedom of the people  
by gradual silent encroachments of those in power,  
than by violent and sudden usurpations.**

*– James Madison*

The way that Sustainable Development is carried out in local communities around the world is particularly alarming, especially to those who seek accountability in government. Operating within a system of stakeholder councils, organized to give community members a "stake" in the control over property in their neighborhood, proponents of Sustainable Development systematically promote their own ideas and marginalize any local opposition, particularly those individuals who advocate the freedom to use and enjoy private property.

The product of a stakeholder council, often called a "consensus statement" or a "vision statement," is typically approved by local

13. Duncan, Brent, Watch what walls are coming down, Letters To The Editor, Santa Cruz Sentinel, April 23, 2002.

governments without question, requiring citizens to submit to the questionable conclusions of a non-elected regional authority that is not accountable to the voters.

Stakeholder council meetings are typically arranged under the auspices of soliciting input from community members on a project. This project may be initiated by local public officials, a local non-profit organization, a national or regional non-profit organization, or an NGO.<sup>14</sup> It is very rare for community members to instigate the stakeholder “visioning” process.

A typical stakeholder council meeting is run by a trained facilitator.<sup>15</sup> It is not the facilitator’s job to make sure that all views are entered into the record. His job, instead, is to guide the group to arrive at a consensus on the project. The consensus process has no mechanism for recording minority views. Since he is being paid by the organization responsible for the project, it is in his interest to arrive at a consensus sympathetic to the desired outcome of the project. Tactics vary between the facilitators, but consensus generally is reached by using subtle means to marginalize opposition, such as recording only the “good” ideas, and allowing criticism only for the “bad” ideas.

A Sustainable Development stakeholder meeting in Greenville, South Carolina, was adjourned with a frank admission by the paid facilitator that they had not reached the consensus that he needed to support the predetermined plans.<sup>16</sup>

14. Recall that many Non-Governmental Organizations are accredited by the U.N., making them international, or multinational in their political purpose. In this sense, they might be more appropriately called “Global Governance Organizations.”

15. Professional facilitators are frequently paid thousands of dollars for only a few hours of work.

16. Dill, Bob, Land Use Leaders Declare Defeat; Wrong Consensus Reached, Meetings Cancelled, Times-Examiner, Greenville, South Carolina. Steven Lipe, the meeting organizer, announced that “the consensus is that we don’t have enough people to make change. As far as I am concerned, our meeting is done.”

Why all the effort to gain support for programs few citizens want? The answer to this question lies in the origin of each specific project. Sustainable Development projects are often initiated at the directive of NGOs or non-profit organizations that have – or create – fear over problems that are portrayed as a crisis: development near a riparian corridor, poor water management infrastructure, or too many cars on the freeway are common examples.

Once a problem has been identified, every NGO, non-profit, and local government body has a vast stock of Sustainable Development solutions at hand, provided by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). Indeed, ICLEI has a veritable treasure trove of boilerplate solutions for change agents, enabling them to “identify” problems with the goal of implementing predetermined outcomes that advance Sustainable Development policies.<sup>17</sup>

ICLEI, launched in 1990 at the World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future, is based in Toronto, Canada, but has offices around the globe, including Berkeley, California. Its stated mission is to provide policy recommendations to assist local governments in the implementation of Sustainable Development.

ICLEI was instrumental in the development of Agenda 21, having drafted Chapter 28 in 1991 in preparation for the upcoming summit. In a recent document, ICLEI confirmed its dedication to the U.N. mandate: “Local Action 21 strategies [i.e. those formulated at the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa] will ensure the unwavering, systematic implementation of local action plans over the next decade.”<sup>18</sup>

17. cf. Taylor, Jerry, op cit.

18. Otto-Zimmerman, Konrad, Local Action 21: Motto, Mandate, Movement, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, Toronto (2003):

2. See ICLEI’s website for more information: <http://www.iclei.org>.



Nature Conservancy, the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, the American Planning Association, and the National Teachers Association.

The third “leg” of the Sustainable Development financial insiders – after government and non-profit funding schemes – is a group of tax-exempt family foundations. These include the Rockefeller Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, the Turner Foundation, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the McArthur Foundation, and Community Foundations.

## **Political Support**

When George H. W. Bush signed the Rio Accords at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, he pledged the United States’ support for Agenda 21. A year later, when Bill Clinton created the President’s Council for Sustainable Development by Executive Order, he laid the foundation for a proliferation of intermediate and local “stakeholder” councils that would set out to reinvent the structure of United States’ government.

As Sustainable Development policies permeate every county in America, it has become apparent that the conflict is not a dynamic of Republican vs. Democrat, liberal vs. conservative, or left vs. right. In fact, the implementation of Sustainable Development is occurring on a non-partisan basis.

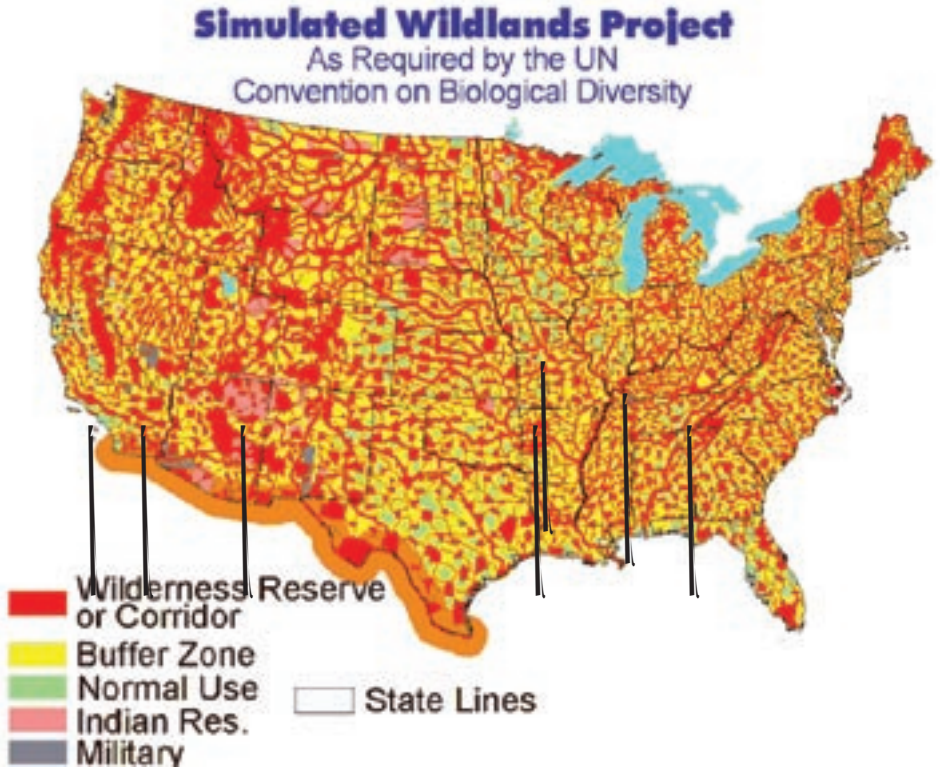


Image 3: Simulated Map of The Wildlands Project, showing land designated off-limits to all human activity (ed).

Prepared by Dr. Michael Coffman, Environmental Perspectives, Inc.

# Sustainable Development Programs

Sustainable Development is a plan for global control, using land and resource restriction, social transformation through education, and other programs to accomplish this end. The land use element of Sustainable Development calls for the implementation of two action plans designed to eliminate private property: the Wildlands Project, and Smart Growth. Upon implementation of these plans, all human action is subject to control.

Since all things ultimately come from natural resources on rural lands, the transfer of the landscape from citizen control to government control will make it easy for government and its partners – NGOs, certain foundations and certain corporations – to control what we have, what we do, and where we go. The transformation of free societies into collectivized societies through Sustainable Development ensures the presence of a ruling elite which, by definition, ultimately excludes all but a very select few.

## **The Wildlands Project**

The Wildlands Project is the plan to eliminate human presence on “at least” 50 percent of the American landscape,<sup>20</sup> and to heavily control human activity on most of the rest of American land. Examples of the piece-by-piece implementation of the Wildlands Project include road closings, the policy of breaching dams undertaken by the Clinton administration, and the adoption of United Nations World Heritage Sites – which are systematically being closed to recreational use.

*“Conservation biologists now agree that protecting isolated pockets of habitat isn’t enough to protect our bears, jaguars, beavers, birds and other wildlife – the only way to protect them is to practice conservation on a continental scale,”* announced Wildlands Project Executive Director, Leanne Klyza Linck, at the Society of Environmental Journalists Conference on September 12, 2003.

The most significant tool of the Wildlands Project is the rapidly expanding imposition of habitat “protection” provisions of the Endangered Species Act, and various “conservation easements” and

20. Reed Noss, who made this assertion in 1992, reiterated his commitment in a recent interview: “Fifty percent is an estimate I made years ago of the proportion of an average region that would need to be managed for conservation in order to meet well-accepted conservation goals ... [It] turns out I was pretty much on the mark ...” (Range Magazine, Fall 2003, p42) Noss is currently the Science Editor for Wild Earth, the quarterly publication of the Wildlands Project.

direct land acquisitions from battered “willing sellers.”

The Wildlands Project seeks to collectivize all natural resources (e.g. water) and centralize all use decisions under government direction, often implemented through public-private partnerships entered into with government insiders.

## **Smart Growth**

The rural land-use plan embodied in the Wildlands Project is inextricably tied to its urban counterpart, Smart Growth. As human beings are barred from rural land, there will be a concentration of human activity in urban areas. Through Smart Growth, the infrastructure is being created for a post-private property era in which human action is subject to centralized government control. With the combined implementation of Smart Growth and the Wildlands Project, humans will be caged, and the animals will run free.

Sometimes called “comprehensive planning” or “growth management,”<sup>21</sup> Smart Growth is the centralized control of every aspect of urban life: energy and water use, housing stock and allocation, population growth and control, public health and dietary regimens, resources and recycling, social justice and education, toxic technology and waste management, transportation modes and air quality, business and economic activity.

Smart Growth policies include:

Transportation plans that reduce the freedom of mobility, forcing people to live near where they work, and transforming communities into heavily-regulated but “self-sufficient” feudalistic “transit villages.”

21. “...we call our [U.N. advocated planning] processes something else, such as comprehensive planning, growth management, or smart growth.” Lawrence, J. Gary, op cit.

Plans to herd citizens into tax-subsidized, government controlled, mixed-use developments,<sup>22</sup> called “human settlements.” These settlements are sometimes distinguished from one another by how productive or useful the citizens are for society.<sup>23</sup>

Heavy restrictions on development in most areas, and the promotion of extremely dense development, constructed and managed by government “partners,” in other selected areas.

Rations on public services, such as health care, drinking water,<sup>24</sup> and energy resources (and sources).

A typical day in the Orwellian society created by Smart Growth would consist of an individual waking up in his government-provided housing unit, eating a ration of government-subsidized foods purchased at a government-sanctioned grocery store, walking his children (if he has any) to the government-run child care center, boarding government-subsidized public transit to go to his government job, then returning home later that evening.

22. The lure of paying as little as \$150 per year in taxes on properties valued at \$1.5 million has led to high occupancy in some developments in Portland, Oregon, for example.

23. The Smart Growth plan for Richland County, South Carolina, for example, distinguishes between “employment-based villages,” and “non-employment-based villages,” with special gated communities set aside for the wealthy individuals responsible for the plan. Most of the “non-employment-based villages” are slated to be built in areas currently populated by the descendants of liberated slaves.

24. Reasonable access to water in urban areas is defined as “the availability of 20 litres per capita per day at a distance no longer than 1,000 metres.” Global Water Supply and Assessment Report 2000.

# What Can You Do?

**“Once again a majority of this court has proved that If enough people get together and act in concert, they can take something and not pay for it. ... But theft is still theft. Theft is theft even when the government approves of the thievery... Turning a democracy into a kleptocracy does not enhance the stature of the thieves; it only diminishes the legitimacy of the government.”**

*– Justice Janice B own,  
dissenting opinion,  
San Remo Hotel v. City and County of San F ancisco<sup>25</sup>*

Sustainable Development is restructuring our lives, and is targeting our children through an educational regime that seeks to develop collectivist attitudes, values, and beliefs. Sustainable Development documents expressly call for the elimination of private property<sup>26</sup> and the freedom that private property supports. It supplants long-standing State laws, and causes irreparable harm to our economy and our society. If individual members of our society do nothing, the continuing loss of liberty will result in increasing social confusion and discord, rising resource shortages, financial decay, and a dimming future for us and our posterity.

The looming battle of ideas should be recognized as a classic – and perhaps ultimate – battle between Liberty and Tyranny. The social, economic, and political transformations Sustainable Development requires will mean the suppression of unalienable rights for all people.<sup>27</sup>

25. No. S091757., SUPREME COURT OF CALIFORNIA, 27 Cal. 4th 643; 41 P.3d 87, March 8, 2002

26. Heywood, V.H. (ed.). op cit.

27. For a more comprehensive discussion of this topic, see the Freedom 21 Draft Alternative to the U.N.’s “Agenda 21” Program for Sustainable Development. [www.freedom21.org/alternative/](http://www.freedom21.org/alternative/)

If Americans, with your help, come to a timely understanding of the threat and face the challenge squarely, the deceptive fraud of Sustainable Development will quickly come to light. Together, we will rise to restore Liberty through an orderly transition directed by reason and respect for the dignity of individual determination. The future of the freedom once taken for granted in America depends on us recognizing and countering the threats of Sustainable Development.

## **5 Practical Steps You Can Take to Restore and Protect Liberty**

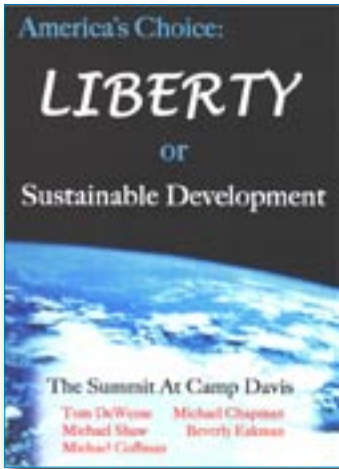
1. Resist the thrust to replace political boundaries with “regional governance,” with the recognition that this form of government leads to a breakdown of accountability to the citizenry.
2. Refuse federal or state money for new Sustainable Development programs that breach the American system of federalism, and cumulatively are raiding the treasury and putting American society in serious jeopardy. Transition out of established Sustainable Development programs.
3. Avoid partnerships with the federal government, NGOs, foundations, and corporations that advance the anti-liberty Sustainable Development agenda. Do not surrender your constituents to the insider privilege of Sustainable Developers and their moneyed interests.
4. Understand your role in the community as a public official: to administer government in a manner that protects individual liberty and ensures equal justice.
5. Know, understand, and apply the Constitution to which you swore an oath, with particular attention to Article 1, Section 8 and the 9th and 10th Amendments, which address the limitations on federal power, and the 14th Amendment, which limits the states’ police power.

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