

Faced with a food and energy crisis, how can society improve its well-being?

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Summary

The world today is faced with food and energy crisis and the buzz word for every person or country now is sustainable development. There are beautiful structures, policies and documents detailing out what can be done but what the main driving force for these is the human race. This means that the human race is the main instrument to be tackled and once that is changed all the other machinery will work perfectly. What do I mean, until I see the greed and selfishness kicked out of the today's human race, then I do not foresee sustainability in anything whether food, energy or climate change. Hence, rich and poor people, rich countries and poor countries must have a common interest for sustainability in food and energy production and management.

As my brain began to reason twenty-eight years ago, there has been one big question I have been searching for an answer - will this world ever be a world of peace where is no hatred, no bloodshed, no hunger or simply no crying? To be candid, I am still searching for the answer to this question and until this world realize the need to provide a concrete answer to this one question mentioned above we can never ever come close to sustainable development of food and energy for both rich and poor in this world.

What is sustainability by the way? Some say it is the strategies we put in to ensure that the future generation gets the good things we are enjoying now. Others say sustainability is having a key respect for our environment and so on and so forth. To me sustainability is an individual open-heartedly helping a neighbour in need or one country responding to the crisis of a neighbouring country – this way the good will built here is transferred from one generation to another. In this way, the rules and norms governing sustainability can be achieved.

If everything was correct in this world then one would expected that with all our fast advancement in technology development, our food and energy crisis could also be resolved in the same direction. I am quite confident that the number of people who live without food this day compared to the day I was a kid has not significantly improved regardless of all the renowned estimations of World Organisations. My village (Nandom north-western part of Ghana), people are worse off than the day I was born. Global climate changes are adversely affecting the poor especially in developing countries. As a result, prediction regarding reliable weather forecast to know when farming season starts is a huge challenge for these people. Bear in mind most of the developing world depends on agriculture for livelihood. Of course, poor predictions by these farmers lead them to even worse harvests. In addition to this, while technology is greatly increasing in developed world regarding subsidies for farmers in developed world; continuously farmers in developing world faced even reduced support. The consequences of this is poor harvest leading to high food insecurity in these areas.

What next in these areas? There is survival for the fitters. The smarter ones decide to take some 'bow and arrow' to the streets so that they can amass the little food from the others. This ends up in war and hunger. My heart cries with sorrow when I sometimes watch TV and see thousands of women and children starving out of hunger in parts of Africa and Asia. Usually when war sets in, International Organisations are at the doorsteps of the victims to give food and shelter aid. Why is it the international organisations do not put up all their together and easily wiped out these 'cheats'? What is the common norm we see in society – after the 'cheats' have finished their jobs – it is then the international community calls these 'cheats' to International Court of Justice to decide if they were just in their actions. It is a great pity that this world is not a home for me! Injustice everywhere – the strong protected and the weak strengthen greatly. Indeed, with greed and selfishness that I see flowing out of the leaders of today's world, I do not see in the soonest future sustainability of anything: whether food or energy.

What about all these noise about the energy crisis? Will the Oil Industry having been one of the richness industries in the world suddenly sit down and think about more environmentally friendly sources like bio-fuel etc? This is a first challenge to say whether sustainability is possible amidst all the conferences and workshops. By the way, how many people are even benefiting from the energy produce from these industries? May be in the developed economies, may be in the cities and towns of developing countries. Can we be fair to those who do not get benefits from this by giving some subsidies or benefits? Then another question comes from this, from who pocket must these benefits from? Though the obvious answer is from those who truly benefit – the rich; they have toiled to be rich and hence every one must do but what they forget if all our fingers where of the length and size I think we will not be able to use our hands. There can be thousand and one questions why the energy crisis in the world will continue to surface in conferences, workshops and seminars but until greed and selfishness are removed out of the norms and regulations of energy development, until oil industries are ready to comprise for more environmentally friendly sources like bio-fuel and until those who do not benefit from this energy are giving some benefits, then I feel we really have a long way towards achieving sustainability in resolving energy crisis.

Let me end with the porcupine story of the Chinese to summarise how sustainability can be achieved in food and energy crisis. *"A group of porcupines gathered together in winter but they are in a great dilemma. What is the best distance to keep between each other? If they are too closely huddled together, they will prick each other. Also, if they stay too far apart, they will keep each other warm. After several trial and errors, they finally found an optimum distance where everybody gets to keep warm without pricking each other"*. I believe we are still in the trial and errors phases to obtain this optimum distance towards sustainable strategies for food and energy for all but the first obstacles clouding our eyes to enable us start to putting in the strategies towards this optimum distance is greed and selfishness from those who are stronger. And as a result of this, the weak and humbled continuously threaten the strong with insecurity.