

## Vinyl 2010 Essay Competition Submission Template

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### **Summary:**

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Today is a time when the destiny of the human civilization is being determined. There have been enough finger-pointing on why the world is now facing a crisis. The important question is, where do we go from here?

Certainly, the answers include the political will of governments to responsibly regulate businesses and establish policies to safeguard the affordability of basic commodities like food and fuel. It also includes cooperation among governments. The values of sustainable development are best appreciated at these crucial times, more than ever.

Finally, every individual must do his share to improve his own well-being.

### **Essay:**

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Today is a time when the destiny of the human civilization is being determined. Throughout the world's history, food and energy have been the core bases of our continued development. It was because of "food" why human civilizations began in the fertile lands of Mesopotamia and Yangtze River while it was our pursuit for energy that we developed our modern societies. Now, as the population of the world grows so rapidly and as our traditional sources of energy become scarce, we ask ourselves, where do we go from here?

While everything seems to be a matter of debate as the crisis becomes more and more complex by the day, many governments have lost track of their regulatory powers giving in to so many businesses that have become so focused on earning money and turned capitalism into a greedy play of earning profits, at the expense of those who are less likely to eat three square meals a day.

Unseasonal droughts in grain-producing areas, increased biofuel usage, growing demands and rising oil prices, among other things were considered the reasons why in 2007 and 2008, food prices, especially staple food like rice and wheat skyrocketed. However, what the analysts probably have missed to discuss are the roles of governments to regulate capitalists and establish policies that would have safeguarded their people's supply and affordability of food, and the energy capitalists' greedy application of the law of supply and demand.

I believe it's time that governments and the business sector re-examine the way they deal with crisis and their priorities. It's now a matter of life and death. While OPEC executives for example are busy in their meetings in their air-conditioned session rooms on how to protect their profits, many people in Africa cannot afford

to buy food and are starving and ordinary citizens in Southeast Asia are trying to skip some meals or walking kilometers to reach their schools and offices. But after all, the present situation has had enough finger-pointing. What we need now are bold solutions from everyone.

Now, let me go back to the main question. Where do we go from here? It is no secret that the world today is facing tremendous problems, the economy being among the biggest challenges and the poorest of the poor, the big time victims. I believe at these times, we can appreciate the values of sustainable development, more than ever and cooperation among sectors and among governments are needed so badly. There is no better way for society to improve its well-being than becoming cooperative, more than letting our selfish interests compete against one another.

Starting at the higher level, governments need to cooperate in terms of supplying each others' needs so as to prevent prices of basic commodities from going up. I think it's simple but the complexity begins on the way our governments and the international communities look at things. For one, an oil producing nation can always cooperate with food-generating one and agree on a trade agreement that will benefit both of them and their people. I believe it will work for all governments that are desiring to maintain affordability of basic commodities for their people's welfare.

Internally, governments must be able to set policies that will push for sustainable development practices among their business sectors. Policies to regulate the sale of basic goods or commodities must also be established to safeguard the welfare of the majority, making sure that an ordinary citizen can still buy decent meals, go to school or work conveniently with an affordable transportation and avail of environment-friendly electricity, among others. It goes without saying that corruption must be eliminated totally from each government system if we are to hope for policies that will work for the people.

Those are easier said than done but ambitious political will can do a lot.

Moreover, big time businesses cannot afford to take advantage of the current crisis to grow more profit while billions of people are suffering. It's given that most people now are depending on big capitalists that manufacture and process basic commodities like food, fuel, electricity and others. But again if proper regulation is observed, these companies cannot be selfish. From their end, the private sector should develop sustainable development practices. An oil company for instance could diversify on other energy sources, not only to safeguard their business' future but to also make sure that their services will remain relevant to a society struggling to cope with rising fuel prices. Sustainable development would also mean the elimination of harmful chemicals in growing our food, like going organic, so the soil can remain best-suited for agriculture. It could also mean being mindful of the effects of climate change and excessive carbon emission in

the operation of businesses. Not only it is good for the image of the company to practice the principles of sustainable development, it would sustain them for the harsh future ahead while helping the society survive.

Now, everyone also has to do his/her part. I have proven that the youth have fresh ideas in terms of sustainable developments. In the Philippines, I have seen students helping develop organic farming to reduce harsh effects of chemicals on the soil and on the environment at large. Inventors can also turn their attention on developing new technologies that will lessen society's dependence on traditional fuel usually imported from the Middle East like some people's efforts to turn water into fuel for cars. Finally, every individual has the obligation to do something to improve his/her own well being which requires being innovative. Simple practices such as trash segregation and recycling, conserving water and electricity, learning how to discipline one's diet and a hundred and one more ways to help one's self and the society to survive and improve are very important.

Certainly, considering the human intelligence and spirit for innovation, solutions will never be out of hand.