

ideas, as paraphrased below, can be adapted in hundreds of ways and at all levels of society.

- a. Extend the planning horizon. Choose options more for their long-term costs and benefits. Develop incentives and provide tools and procedures to report, respect and be responsible for issues that unfold over decades.
- b. Improve the signals. Learn more about and monitor the real welfare of the human population and the real impacts of human activity on the world ecosystems. Include environmental and social costs in economic prices.
- c. Lessen response time. Look for signals that indicate when the environment or society is being stressed. Decide in advance what to do if problems appear, have in place arrangements necessary to act effectively. Educate in systems thinking.
- d. Minimize the use of nonrenewable resources. Fossil fuels, fossil groundwater and minerals should be used only with the greatest possible efficiency.
- e. Prevent the degradation of renewable resources. Protect soil productivity, surface water, rechargeable groundwater and all living things. Use only within regeneration rates.
- f. Use all resources with maximum efficiency. The more human welfare that can be obtained within a given ecological footprint, the better the quality of life can be while remaining below the limits.
- g. Slow and eventually stop exponential growth of population and physical capital. Very essential – involves institutional and philosophical change and social innovation. This guideline asks, simply, for a larger and more truly satisfying vision of the purpose of human existence than mere physical expansion and accumulation of material goods. New horizons lie beyond the obvious.

Why do we have this strong urge, this commitment to growth? Because we have been locked in a system of “the commons” for a long, long time. Most people in the world today desperately need hope. Hope is to cherish a desire; to nurture a want. Growth may be a false hope, but it is better than no hope at all. Growth, however, is not solving the fundamental problems of humanity. These problems are poverty, unemployment, and unmet needs. Remember admiration and respect, dignity and integrity, excitement and beauty? We seem to be growing the wrong things if we want to restructure our global system.

All of us are in this overshoot together. There are enough resources to share fairly, if we manage well. If we don’t manage well, no one, no matter how wealthy, will escape the consequences. If we cut down the symbolic last tree there is no escape – there is no place to go – and there is no one out there to help us.