

WN Editorial

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Visions 2016-2030 and beyond **Sustenance**

The *World Nutrition Visions* series began in 2014. It is synthesised in this issue with the 36-page summary of statements by 19 of our editorial team and regular contributors. It is one of the most significant collective statements this journal has made. Five visionaries are quoted below - from the top, José Luis Vivero Pol from Spain and Belgium, Olivia Yambi from Tanzania, Pilar Zazueta from Mexico and the US, Thiago Héric de Sá from Brazil and the UK, and Mark Wahlqvist from Australia and China.

- My greatest aspiration is to see food freed from being a mere commodity, just as people who were once slaves became free from being commodities two centuries ago because morals changed. The same must happen with food, and for similar philosophical reasons.
- What generates good health is an environment that enables people who are poor to use their capacities to act in ways that enhance their access and use of those public services. An environment that promotes a state of wellness and that creates confidence and assurance for people to care for themselves, and a system of governance that nurtures dignity.
- To me the factor that mainly determines well-being, health and disease outcomes is power. Some human groups have achieved better living standards than others. They have more economic resources, live longer, eat better, and have more leisure time and less stress. Today, these groups also tend to live in the global North 'liberal democracies'.
- I hope to live in a global society in which the lives of the poorest people are worth more than all the wealth of the richest ones, and in an era in which everybody has something, nobody has nothing, and nobody has much
- Whether the tide of affairs can be turned before habitable ecosystem collapse occurs, depends on slowing, stopping and reversing population growth, arresting ecosystem destruction, better strategies to resolve conflict, and providing satisfying and productive livelihoods in all populations and communities.

Two of our visionaries' main objections to the 'sustainable development goals' issued by the UN and its member states, positioned as guides to world policies from now until 2030, are as follows. One, as stated [in this issue's main editorial](#) and the [leading Update item](#), is that most if not all main trends are against the direction of sustainability.

Second and related, the official documents that list and celebrate the goals never seriously challenge the dominant ideology of incessant economic, technological and industrial ‘development’ – quantitative growth. This is wrecking the planet. Specifically, it is demolishing sustainable food systems and jeopardising world health and nutrition. Defined and pursued as it is now, development cannot be sustainable.

Who you can trust

Sometimes the more high and mighty and unanimous an agreement among masters of the universe and their attendant officials and experts, the more total and blatant is their error. This is one such time. Our visionaries, young and old, female and male, from all continents, can see – as we trust you can – that what is in store for the human, living and physical world cannot turn out well until after there is a total reformation in thinking and understanding of what now must be paramount in human affairs. These are not just matters of quantity – such as more exploitation, production, consumption and money – but above all matters of quality – such as dignity, tolerance, respect, justice, peace, well-being, and life itself. This is what is meant here by ‘sustenance’.

The ‘sustainable development goals’ are misguided. By contrast, our *Visions* series is by its nature trustworthy – it is coming from the right place and pointing in the right direction. In [letters published in this issue](#), two *WN* visionaries, José Luis Vivero Pol and Mark Wahlqvist, rightly see the need for aspiration – reaching out in hope and belief for what is not yet attainable. But like the great mediaeval cathedrals built throughout Europe to aspire to heaven, hopes and beliefs must have a sound basis, or else the edifice will collapse into rubble. And the notion of ‘growth’ and ‘development’ which is the basis of the still-dominant politics and economics, is quicksand.

There are many organisations and movements through the world, from international to local levels, that know this too, openly say so, and that act on their knowledge and conviction. They therefore can be trusted. Another visionary, Raj Patel, now based in the US, also reminds us that everybody can make a difference. He cites

The Occupy member who defends a home against foreclosure. The volunteer at a food bank who decides food banks are an insult, and who vows that no society should need a food bank in the future. The indigenous seed saver who prevents the corporate enclosure of thousands of years of knowledge. The cook who teaches children the joy of real food and gives the gift of critical thinking. Anyone who cracks open the world to reveal the possibilities beyond this one, and lives the politics that will get us there.

Please now turn to our [whole *Visions* commentary](#). In showing what so many *WN* contributors believe, it indicates the right road ahead in world affairs. The final challenging statement here is written by visionary George Kent from the US:

I put my hopes in young people of the sort identified by and now contributing to *World Nutrition*, the people heard in these pages that have broken free of the narrow confines of conventional nutrition science.

The Visions team