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THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

In 1987, the United Nations released the Brundtland Report, which included what is now one of the most widely recognized definition of sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." It contains within it two key concepts, i) The concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and ii) The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs."((WCED), 1987). All definitions of sustainable development require that people see the world as a system—a system that connects space; and a system that connects time. When people think of the world as a system over space, they grow to understand that air pollution from North America affects air quality in Asia, and that pesticides sprayed in Argentina could harm fish stocks off the coast of Australia.(IISD, 2011). The concept of sustainable development is rooted in sort of systems thinking. It helps people understand themselves and the world. The problems that world facing are complex and serious. Therefore, the concept of sustainable development is not a development of one of its element. The UN took the initiative of raising the slogan of 'Development without Environmental Destruction' and in requesting all governments to take positive steps towards rationalizing the use of natural resources. The term of 'Sustainable Development' which emerged in the 1970s (after the UN Conference) to express the interdependence between development and environment has been given many definitions and explanations. In fact, the debate around the new term has produced a kind of 'conceptional confusion'.The concept of sustainable development has triggered debate on the issue of justice in the distribution of natural resources among successive generations. Justice in the distribution of natural resources within the context of successive generations means that those who live now on this planet should not be extravagant in the consumption of resources or misuse them, since this will create problems for those who are to come after them(Yousri).As has been elaborated above, sustainable development, which is attached with a number of principles highlighting its nature and goals.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Development in Islam, Frame Work

1. The Meaning of Development

Development in its contemporary meaning is the increase in resources through the increase in production and the decrease in costs. This definition is especially used in economic studies in order to link development to various fields including economics, politics, administration and culture (Albaqri, 1985). In order for development to be successful it has to be sustainable so that the benefits of it can reach future generations. The process of development causes a drastic change in the society as a whole and is not specific to certain segments of the population. In addition it also causes change in a variety of fields (Sharaf, 1994).

2. The Meaning of Development In Islam

Development in Islam is the general growth of human beings who in turn build and advance the world they live in. Economic development in Islam is a shared responsibility between the government and the people. Islam is not pro capitalism which guarantees freedom of action but does not guarantee daily income and survival and in the same time it is not pro communism which guarantees daily income and forbids freedom of speech and action. On the other hand, development in Islamic thought tends to focus on attempting to eradicate the causes of economic problems in the first place.

This is done through non-financial ways of social development including stressing the importance of human ties, solving communal problems...etc. Accordingly, social development is achieved through the development of basic human needs, the development of natural resources and the realization of public welfare (Sharaf, 1994).

3. The Frame Work of Development In Islam

It has been made clear in Islamic teachings that Islam is in support of development and the construction of the earth. This concept was made comprehensible through a number of Hadiths (sayings) by the prophet (PBUH). These include; "God loves for one of you, if you do a job, do it perfectly" (Alam, 1996).

Islam also calls for hard work and perseverance for as Omar Ibn Elkhatab said: it does not rain neither silver nor gold. The prophet also says: "One who works in order to (earn and) support a widow and destitute is like a mujahid (warrior) in the path of Allah. Hence work that is both serious and skillful is an important part of the sacred religion and without it the Muslim's worship is deficient (Alam, 1996).

All Muslims are required to work in order to fight poverty. For those who exerted effort in life shall receive their reward and lead a prosperous life "So walk in the paths thereof and eat of His province" (Almulk:15) while those who haven't make use of their lives in a beneficial way does not have the right to blame poverty or ignorance for his condition and only himself to hold responsible also Islam dislikes poverty and resembles it to the disbelief in God because of its bad influence on the society as a whole (Alkaradawi, 1994). The Prophet said, "The upper hand is better than the lower hand" (i.e. he who gives in charity is better than him who takes it)... (Babilli, 1982).

4. Conclusion

Ultimately, we find that the Islamic concept of development is based on rules, ethics and code of conduct that are more than sufficient for meeting the requisites of sustainable development. In other words, most of the refined principles of sustainability will only form one segment of the Islamic conception of development. It is important to recognize that we have in the Islamic system, a comprehensive framework of sustainable development that is supported by religious rules and ethical values. That framework is already available through hard work is still needed to devise the mechanisms and best policies that will bring about the desirable goals effectively within the proper framework. I strongly believe Islam offers mechanisms that will ensure success in this life and in the Hereafter.

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