

ANPED's vision text

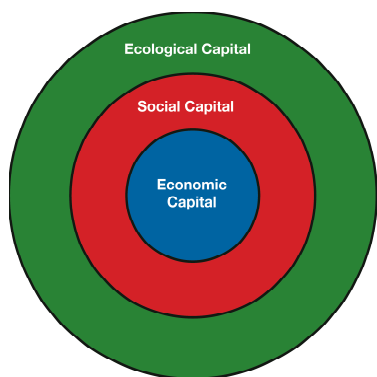
ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability, is an international not-for-profit organization with a mission to empower Northern civil society through capacity development, exchanges and sharing of knowledge. We are working in close cooperation with Southern civil society and other stakeholders; thus creating and protecting sustainable communities and societies world-wide.

Our goal is to promote fair and equitable sustainable development for all with respect for the limits of our common ecological and social capital.

The term 'sustainable development' is often used in different and inappropriate ways, but the earliest definition (from the 1987 UN report *Our Common Future*^[1]) defines it as "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*". This stresses that global development needs to meet basic needs - especially of the world's poor. But we have to admit that there are still huge barriers to achieve sustainable development. These are social inequity and the fact that the blind economic growth path does not recognise the environmental limits. These environmental limits are being exceeded, year after year, causing long-term damage to our environment and, in the end, undermining social development.

Living beyond our limits: the challenge of sustainable consumption and production

At the core of this work is the need to develop more sustainable patterns of consumption and production. This was a priority in 1992 at the UN Earth Summit and the WSSD in 2002, and though some progress has been made, it's not been enough to stay within our environmental limits, nor do we seem to be on the road of resolving our global social inequalities. Work has focused mostly on 'eco-efficiency', greener products and services, and reducing energy use. So far there is little sign that this approach can lead to the reductions in the use and waste of (all natural) resources on the scale that is needed to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and detoxifying our environment and enable us to live within global limits. The steps taken so far fail to meet the scale and urgency of the problems humanity is confronted with: as such the approach taken to achieve sustainable production and consumption so far has been too weak. ANPED stands for a strong approach to sustainability.



We need to radically reduce our use of natural resources, radically reduce our emissions, and radically ensure global equity. This requires that decisions are taken now that will have such radical changes as effect. ANPED wants to be the centre of a movement that will ensure that the steps are taken towards a **strong** approach to sustainable consumption and production. It recognises that we have been living

beyond our limits, and that development has been based on a huge input of natural resources (many non-renewable) while causing waste and emissions that are now negatively affecting our planet.

Towards a sustainable and equitable society

If we are to see truly sustainable consumption and production, we need to make major changes and to recognise that much of our current economic system has failed us. We have seen an over-riding focus on

consumerism, a failure to tackle poverty, and far too little effective work to improve quality of life, health and well-being.

We now need strong action by all sectors of society, with all enables stakeholders to play their specific role. Alongside eco-innovation and 'greening the markets' we need effective policy instruments including economic incentives (to stimulate innovation) and regulation (to ensure that change happens everywhere). Strong governance and better and more public participation should also support social innovation to increase quality of life.

Governments and international agencies need to set out clear policy frameworks and targets. Business and communities need to develop a new infrastructure that result in the sustainable use of natural resources (recognising that there is only one planet all of humanity has to live on) to help us reach those targets. Individuals and civil society need to make their voices heard demanding and proposing change and innovation. But just talking about change is not enough; changes also need to be made in our own lives and behaviour. Every sector needs to provide leadership and push for change. When that happens, society can and will lose its fascination with short-term economic growth merely measured in financial terms. Society will start delivering a long-term development that distributes global wealth equitably across all of global society and across generations.

Creating a future that works for us all

An important step in making the transition to a strong sustainable consumption and production pattern is to urgently implement radical changes in how we produce even our most basic needs, including food, shelter, entertainment and mobility. Old, unsustainable technologies dominate our current economy and unfairly compete with the innovations that are already made. The two century old industrial revolution in agriculture needs to be replaced with the organic revolution currently taking place. The fossil-based economy needs to be replaced by a renewable energy based economy, without of course endangering food security and sovereignty. Decentralisation and public ownership of energy and water supply is needed. Each of these transitions are possible, the concepts and innovations exist. What lacks is a system that allows them to beat the unsustainable technologies that are driving our societies to the edge of collapse. By implementing these radical changes, we will radically reduce the use of our planet's natural resources by the few who can afford them, and provide the environmental space for all inhabitants of this planet to enjoy a high quality of life.

So we see the need for a guided long-term contraction of the economies in industrialised nations to ensure wellbeing within environmental limits, and to give "environmental space" for the countries that have to grow to meet their basic needs and a minimum level of well being. A process of 'contraction and convergence' in the use of natural resources is needed. Reallocation of wealth is one of the best ways for poverty eradication.

What's next is to implement the governance systems that will ensure the benefits of this new sustainable economy will reach all, ensuring that the reallocation of wealth and resources takes place fairly and equitably. This generation can be the force that delivers a society that has escaped the cycle of 'boom and bust' and avoided continuing social and environmental crises. This must be a transition from a prime focus on growth measured in GDP to working towards sustainable and fair well-being. This will involve a shift in culture, thinking, values and education, and will lead to new patterns of consumption and production.

All over the world people recognise the need for a green and just economy. Civil society organisations have a key role to play in creating this real sustainable future.

ANPED and its members are working to this end: we invite you to join us!