Introduction

The Socialist model of governance is considered by many nations a utopian ideal that is not fully attainable today. Evenly distributing the wealth and resources of a nation is difficult to achieve. It relies on some people giving up their ability to obtain greater resources so others can get what they need to have an adequate quality of life. However, many countries such as Canada try some form of socialized governance to ensure equal access to health and political representation.

An environmental philosophy called sustainability borders on a socialist model of governing. It encourages all people to use resources responsibly. Responsibly means finding ways that ensures all people in the world have the resources they need and will permit future generations the same availability. Sustainability usually means people who use disproportionately large amounts of resources must cut back. This becomes a practice by putting in place recycling programs, pollution reduction, water conservation, and other activities that reduce the need per capita for energy and materials.

People living in developed nations use almost 80% of the Earth’s energy and natural resources. Yet, they make up a small proportion of the world’s population. This situation severely restricts the number of people who could achieve this status. All natural resources would be depleted in no time if everyone in the world decided to live that way. Thus, the next generation would be left with bleak prospects of surviving. Today, many countries are courting the idea of developing energy intensive lifestyles. So, the philosophy of Earth Governance was formulated to promulgate sustainable ways of living.

Background

Several attempts have been made in North America to develop an Earth government for conserving natural resources. Two ambitious attempts at achieving this are the Global Resource Bank started by John Pozzi of the United States and the Global Community started by Germain Dufour of Canada. Pozzi’s Global Resource Bank operates the following way (Figure 1):

“The Global Resource Bank is a world central bank that supports a prosperous global society. The Bank produces a commodity-based currency that integrates civilization with Earth’s natural environment. Global Resource Bank shareholders define economics as the science that deals with the production, distribution and conservation of Earth’s ecoproduct wealth such as air, water, soil, climate and biological diversity. The Bank issues ecocredit - a currency that values ecoproducts.”
Figure 1: People of the Earth are equal shareholders in resources. They can invest or trade their resources into various programs that ensure the equitable distribution of natural resources. (Image courtesy of the Global Resource Bank)

The Global Resource Bank invests resource allocations in a fund that ensures an equitable distribution of resources. It then permits people to buy options from others to balance their ecological footprint. The Global Footprint Network defines ecological footprint as “A resource management tool that measures how much land and water area a human population requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb its wastes, taking into account prevailing technology.” So, people in developing nations can trade certain shares for other resources found in industrialized nations.

Dufour’s Global Community is more of a grassroots effort designed to provide convincing evidence for governments to adopt sustainable missions involving global resource sharing. It is best summarized by the diagram shown in Figure 2. The goal of the Global Community movement is to have a global government that oversees resource use and allocations. It aims at reducing national defense budgets hoping to use the funds to develop sustainable technologies and social philosophies. The group recently recognized Canada’s government for taking steps in the direction of an Earth Government. Dufour envisions Canada’s parliamentary system and social as a potential model for his global community concept.

Canada’s parliamentary legislation influences every aspect of society in a way that ensures all the needs of its diverse population are represented and served. The socialist perspective of the government encourages a distribution of resources so no people are lacking basic needs. The procurement of great wealth is permissible, but it comes with a cost. Taxes ensure that a significant percentage of personal funds go to helping society. Dufour is imploring Canada to take a stand to convince other nations to follow the path to an Earth Governance system.
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Figure 2: Elements of the Earth Government (courtesy of The Global Community).

The Issues

Developing nations are more likely to be in favor of an Earth Government that better protects their access to resources. Many of these nations are already claiming that their resources are exploited and exported. The countries that produce much of the world’s fossil fuels, raw materials, and food do not have the luxury of using those resources to the extent that is done in the nation purchasing the resources. Income from exporting those resources is unlikely to raise the living standards of the people in these developing nations. There is a growing sentiment for people in these nations to have a right to control the environmental disruption caused by others exploiting their resources. They feel coerced to export the same commodities the people wish they can afford to buy. Plus, many people in these nations feel that the act of being dependent on exporting resources prevents the nation from redirecting to sustainable development. This development would keep the resource wealth in the nation and ensure the economy fulfills the needs of all citizens. Most of the world’s population lives in countries that export most of their resources.
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People in democratic industrialized nations feel they have a right to their ability to acquire resources and wealth. They present the argument that the personal freedoms granted within their governmental structures promote development and economies for developing nations. Resource usage is seen as a personal freedom that should be regulated by the people and not by government policies. The free market ultimately will regulate resource conservation. After all, people will learn to conserve and recycle when the market availability for a certain resource becomes prohibitively expensive or scarce. The recycling market in countries such as the United States is not yet profitable because resources seem to be adequate enough to not necessitate austere environmental policies.

References

Literature


Web Sites

1. Earth Government
   http://members.shaw.ca/earthgov/
2. Global Governance
   http://www.sovereignty.net/
3. Global Resource Bank
   http://www.grb.net/
4. International Institute for Sustainable Development
   http://www.iisd.org/
5. United Nations
   http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/

Key Principles

1. Environmental policy
2. Earth government
3. Global policy
4. Resource management
5. Sustainability

Ethical Considerations

1. Who should be trusted with controlling resource usage for each individual?
2. How is it possible to give equal rights to resources for all people on the Earth?
3. What are the rights of individuals in countries who demand more resources to maintain their accepted standard of living?
4. What are the consequences of some nations not accepting the global governance of resources?
5. Is it feasible for one government to be a role model for how the rest of world should practice policy?
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Civic Engagement & Service Opportunities

1. Volunteer for a local community group involved in global environmental policy in your area.
2. Write or e-mail your local politicians about environmental policy issues in your area that are not global in nature.
3. Form a student group having an environmental preservation mission.
4. Set up a public forum at your school discussing global environmental policies that can be used in your area.

Learn more about community service as part of your educational enrichment by visiting the following websites: http://www.learnandserve.org/, http://www.servicelearning.org/.

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