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y

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presentación por

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Thank you for this opportunity to present today. It is a real pleasure to be present amongst such a distinguished group of professionals. My name is Tom Esakin and I have professional experience in sustainability planning in Canada. I would like to introduce and thank Walter Lopez Rivera, who has knowledge of sustainable development and has kindly agreed to translate for me today. Due to the need for translating my presentation, my own speaking time will be kept to about 12 minutes.

Today, the work of our world’s urban planners is more important than ever, for the challenges you must address are growing exponentially.

Urban population growth is one consideration. According to UN-HABITAT, the UN’s Human Settlements Programme, while in the Year 1800 only 2% of the world’s population was urbanised, this Year of 2007 will mark the first time in history that the world’s urban population will exceed 50% and that of the rural population.

Then there is the recognition of UN-HABITAT’s 2006 *Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements* that:

“... the condition of human settlements largely determines the quality of life, the improvement of which is a prerequisite for the full satisfaction of basic needs, such as employment, housing, health services, education and recreation.”

This means, *how* you plan your communities really matters.

Added on top of this, planners must face what UN-HABITAT has recognised as a consequence of urban growth, one detrimental to sustainable cities: an *urban penalty*, where the urban poor are actually becoming worse off than their rural counterparts. Growing urban poverty is now one of your considerations.

Then layered on top of your already many important considerations comes an idea called *sustainable development*.

This year marks the 20th anniversary since the *UN World Commission on Environment and Development* released their now-famous report, *Our Common Future*, which introduced our world to the concept of sustainable development.

In this same UN report, the World Commission gave what still remains today's most common definition of sustainable development:

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Since that day, awareness about and support for sustainable development has grown. The United Nations has declared the Years 2005 – 2014 as the *Decade for Education for Sustainable Development*.

Let me clearly outline what the World Commission saw and what I also consider as entailing sustainable development. Sustainable development is *not* as an environmental concept, although it is commonly misunderstood as one. It is a bigger approach to human development that takes into account each of the social, environmental, and economic aspects of human societies.

Sustainable development's inclusion of varying degrees of each of its three social, environmental and economic components is often referred to as its "Triple Bottom Line".

One of the most integral aspects of sustainable development – yet also one of its most overlooked aspects - is the "who" is involved in sustainability planning and sustainability activities. The World Commission emphasised the importance to sustainable development of empowering and engaging the diversity of a community's residents – the poor and rich, old and young, street people and those living in large gated homes, indigenous peoples, women, youth, workers, business people, academics, and all interested people – in sustainable development. You cannot have a sustainable community if some people are living sustainably and other are not. Your full community must be engaged in some manner in sustainable living for sustainable development to be pursued.

This is often referred to as a "bottom-up" process, where political and community leaders are called on to practice a new style of leadership of "leading from behind" instead of a more traditional "top-down" approach. Yet this approach is one that often appears as quite psychologically challenging to political and community leaders all over the world. This approach challenges traditional "ideas" of what it means to lead.

A leader "leads from behind" by willingly allowing and participating in the creation of local processes to engage all the diverse parts of a community. They willingly agree to participate as a "First Amongst Equals" in these same processes, right beside and alongside their fellow citizens. Such a leader uses their position of authority to morally encourage & persuade their community toward s.d. principles & community sustainability. Through these processes, the citizens of a community are collectively, with their leaders, deciding the sustainable future of their community. The leader then leads by their acting on the sustainability strategies

collectively developed by their community's citizens and by the leader ensuring that, to the best of their ability, these strategies are carried out for the community. Just as in business planning, there is ongoing, preferably annual, planning undertaken and regular feedback loops established to customers, which in this case the customers are a community's citizens.

The underlying premise of this process – often referred to as an Local Agenda 21 or LA21 process, named after the Agenda 21 framework for action on sustainable development that 176 World Governments, including Mexico's, committed to at the UN's Rio Earth Summit of 1992 - is that it will only be in the bringing together of the diversity of people in a community to collectively discuss their social, environmental and economic perspectives that the people of a community will then “buy in to” and “agree to” pursue sustainable practices.

Think of yourself when someone “tells” you to do something versus when you are “asked” for your opinion. We can often become agitated when told to do something but actually become more open to ideas when we are asked as an equal for our view. *An invitation to participate encourages co-operation.* This sustainable development process simply tries to capture some of the realities of how humans tend to relate to one another and of how humans can be encouraged to work toward sustainable development.

After a career in the Canadian political environment, I immediately became a convert to sustainable development when I learned of the practice after I saw the win-win-win situations it can create over the win-lose situations I often saw in politics. The “idea” of sustainable development provides humans with a tangible framework for us to achieve our highest potential and a brighter future.

My own experience with such an LA21 process includes Canada's Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. In this environmentally-conflicted area, the LA21 process we developed designed activities to specifically engage each and every identified social group in the community. This involved things such as community dinners for each of four indigenous communities in the Biosphere Reserve, community meetings in three non-indigenous communities, a curriculum developed for the local elementary schools, a sustainability planning kits mailed to all homes in the Region, a radio phone-in show, newspaper column and ads, radio ads in indigenous language, symposiums, and even a facilitated meeting with political, economic, indigenous, and environmental leaders of the region. The outcomes of this complete process were a complete set of Sustainability, Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals & Objectives, and Benchmarks & Indicators for the Region. If you are interested in learning more about this experience, please do feel free to speak with me after the presentation.

The scientific evidence about the negative consequences of humans NOT practicing sustainable development is growing exponentially.

Only this week, the Jan 16th edition of the NY Times featured a science story on “The Warming of Greenland”. The story noted that “The abrupt acceleration of melting ice in Greenland has taken climate scientists by surprise” for this rate of ice melting was thought “impossible”. The story further noted that Greenland is covered by enough ice (630 000 cubic miles or 1,631,692.4 cubic kilometres of ice) that, if it all melted this would “raise global sea levels by 23 feet” (7 metres). At current rates of ice melt in Greenland, the globe's oceans are expected to rise by 1 to 2 feet (30 cms to 61 cms) in the next 10 years. This will have certain

impacts for the world's coastal areas, including Mexico's and its coastal tourist cities such as Can Cun, for this latest science suggests that some inland flooding can be expected. What might such flooding mean for Can Cun's new Terminal 3 airport facility, being built on swamp / mangrove land? Planners must begin to consider and plan for the impacts of unsustainable human development.

LA21s help one understand why, poetically speaking, sustainable development is often described as 'journey' over a final destination. It involves an ongoing process.

Yet moving from concept to reality, from poetry to practice, has been one of sustainable development's biggest challenges.

Fortunately for sustainable development, one of its strengths is also its adaptability. There is no any *one way* or any *right way* to practice sustainable development. Its appearance will vary depending on people, place, culture, climate, differences of local flora and fauna, and local dynamics including business activities and even funding restrictions.

Don't be intimidated by the amount of work that you think might be needed to place your community on the road to sustainable development. Simply beginning the journey and then doing your best along the way is the most that can be asked for.

But enough talk; let's get to some practical ways you can consider pursuing sustainable development in your communities.

Firstly, at the back of my handouts, I have included a one page document outlining what are considered the *Core Principles of Sustainable Development Strategies*. There is also a second document explaining sustainability visions, missions, strategies, and benchmarks & indicators. These two documents can help guide you in the development of more formal sustainability processes and strategies for your communities.

Additionally, I have included a page of links related to various sustainable development references, models (including for Sustainable Cities) or organisations more familiar to Europeans and Norteamericanos, and which you might explore on your own time.

So what are some creative ways you can develop sustainability strategies and pursue a "Triple Bottom Line" approach to sustainable development? How might you operate within the *spirit* of sustainable development and its call for engaging the diverse citizenry of a community within the cultural context of Mexico? I offer you six suggestions for simple and practical approaches for sustainability planning, from general to specific, with some particular emphases for tourist areas.

1) Embrace sustainable development and sustainable development planning, and understand the growing evidence in its support.

This is not a feel-good sentiment. You must believe in and understand sustainable development in order to speak to the concept, to sell it as a practice, and to be successful at it. Take some time to research the growing scientific and anecdotal evidence that shows that sustainable practices are not just good for people and the environment, but that they are also good for business.

The Natural Step (a link to their website is in my handouts) has countless examples of how sustainable practices make money for companies while companies also help the environment and human societies in the process. The global furniture maker, IKEA, and global carpet maker Interface (a Fortune 5000 Company) are only two prime examples. Companies are often fearful of sustainable development because they see it entailing a cost to their business. Yet there is now much evidence available to you on the internet or through international organisations that clearly and strongly demonstrates the financial benefits of sustainable development and those front-end costs associated with implementing sustainable development practices tend to be more than offset by savings within the first year of their implementation. Use the evidence to your community's advantage.

2) Welcome and seek out the involvement of your community's civil society organisations and citizens in sustainability planning, understanding your community as an essential partner in sustainable development.

There is no need to think that you have or need to have all of the expertise necessary for sustainability planning. It is also essential to understand that the involvement of your community's citizens is essential for your community to be practicing sustainable development. You will likely be surprised at how much information and expertise is already available in your community if you only identified it. You will also likely be surprised at how your sustainability planning is made much easier by your pro-actively seeking out pre-existing community information and general community support. The UN has encouraged that Civil Society Organisations, indigenous and other peoples who have a long-time connexion to their land, women's organisations (women have been identified as being more aware of the goings on in their communities), and youth be actively engaged in sustainability planning processes. My own professional experience has also taught me of the importance of involving a community's moral leaders, such as elders and religious leaders. People have regularly proven to me their willingness to assist if they are called on in full honesty and sincerity.

3) Prepare sustainability planning tool-kits for distribution to civil society organisations, schools, and businesses.

This will begin the process of helping your community's citizens understand *what* sustainable development is, *why* it is important, and *how* they can pursue it in the community - all toward helping you in your sustainability planning and your community in pursuing sustainable development. These kits have been used in Canadian communities such as Whistler, Vancouver, and the Clayoquot. The kits would include a variety of contact mechanisms you would make available so your community can share its sustainability planning ideas with your municipality – such as a website location, an address where mail-in comment cards can be sent, and a phone number for speaking to a local expert on sustainable development.

4) Hold a “Two-way” Community Symposium on Sustainability.

This is in keeping within the spirit of this current *United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development*, would be attended by municipal leaders, and would be open to participation by any interested member of your community. This would be a “two-way” symposium – one where you can start educating your community in sustainable

development and its practices AND where you can hear your community's ideas, concerns and visions to help you in your sustainability planning. Similar processes have been ongoing for many years in other global communities. England has held community sustainability and other such community events in almost every city and town, all to help inform local and national sustainability strategies. Local, state, national and even international support can be sought to help with your first symposium.

5) Use the power of municipal government permitting processes to support your sustainability planning.

One of the ways Vancouver has become known as North America's most Sustainable City and – in partnership with Whistler – is to be host to the world's 1st Sustainable Olympic Games, the 2010 Winter Olympics, is due to the City's political leaders thinking creatively and practicing the New Urban Governance (new political philosophies) called for by sustainable development.

For year's now, Vancouver has been able to pursue sustainability by having significant parts of its urban infrastructure – schools, community centres, parks, social housing, sometimes water and sewer – paid for by developers. The City has used its planning and zoning power to have developers cover such infrastructure costs in return for the City being generous to developers in zoning matters. Contrary to what many developers thought would happen, this approach hasn't scared business away from Vancouver. This approach has actually generally served to make Vancouver more attractive to business and new residents. Why? A City that is designed around people becomes a City where people want to live, thereby resulting it then also becoming a place where business wants to locate. Today, cities such as San Diego, CA are seeking Vancouver's advice on how to design a people friendly, sustainable, city.

Mexican municipalities can be creative in their municipal permitting by requiring local businesses to develop an annual sustainability strategy for their business, with a *Sustainability Planning Permit* granted upon its completion and with this permit itself needed before a municipality issued or renewed a business license. Preferably, these strategies would also require municipal agreement. Once accepted by a municipality and a business has been issued with a *Sustainability Planning Permit*, the strategies would then be filed with the municipality so that the municipality can conduct follow-up with a business to make sure it is meeting the sustainability measures it committed to.

This approach would be a good first step to help municipalities in their sustainability planning and would also provide municipalities with a new permit revenue stream.

In the context of Can Cun and other international tourist centres in Mexico, a municipality can begin by requiring all of its large, international, hotels to be the first businesses to develop in-house sustainability strategies. Business planning is generally a regular part of how large international corporations conduct business. Including a sustainability strategy as part of a business' ongoing annual planning cycle should be a relatively easy process for any large business. At the beginning, business sustainability strategies need not be any more than 3 – 5 pages in length. The important early

consideration is that these strategies are actually developed and that a sector in your community – in this case, the major hotels in your tourist sector - starts thinking sustainably about how they conduct business. Corporately Socially Responsible (CSR) hotels (a concept now taught at length in North American and UK business schools) will embrace the process, while it is expected that many other hotels will participate only reluctantly. In subsequent years, the process can be expanded to other local business enterprises, from largest to smallest. It is the actual development and implementation of sustainability strategies that is most important, even if undertaken by business itself.

Of course, the question will then arise as to “who” will help business in the development of such strategies. This then leads to a final suggestion:

6) Appoint or select *Sustainable Development Co-ordinators* in your community, to aid in local sustainability planning.

These Co-ordinators, whether new or re-assigned municipal employees or entities to whom the responsibility is outsourced, will serve as the contacts for local citizens and businesses to both learn about sustainable development and of how to develop and implement sustainability strategies. Sustainability planning *will* eventually provide a new business opportunity for your community. Sustainability strategy experts will be needed to be engaged to assist hotels and other businesses in the development and implementation of their sustainability strategies. To ensure such sustainability work remains in Mexico and is not outsourced to other-country consultants, local businesses can be directed to these government identified Co-ordinators to help them in their development of sustainability strategies. These Co-ordinators will, of course, charge for the sustainability services they provide, thereby creating employment in your community. If the Co-ordinators are outsourced from government, then as business ventures they will also need to acquire operating permits from the municipality, thereby providing additional revenue to the municipality.

Your community will then begin to have new business opportunities in the knowledge-based service economy and, at least for many foreign businesses seen as returning little of their investment to a local area, a new way of having these businesses return some of their profits to the local community. At the same time, in return for being able to charge business for their sustainability strategy consulting services, have as a requirement that these same Co-ordinators must offer some level of free help and guidance on sustainable development to your community’s citizens. Thus, a sustainable development Triple-Bottom-Line win-win-win situation is then created for your community.

Another option is available to Can Cun, where Universidad del Caribe has a prominent Sustainable Tourism Programme, to Monterrey, where Universidad de Technologica is a recognised leader in Mexico in sustainable development research, and any community which has a state or private university. In Can Cun and Monterrey, the noted universities can be asked to serve as the local *Sustainable Development Co-ordinators*, offering their existing sustainability expertise through a business consulting arm that these universities specifically established for the selling of this expertise to businesses AND for their providing of no-charge sustainable development support to local

community citizens. This alternative process would help these universities grow their knowledge-base and expertise in sustainable development, enable them to offer invaluable support to their local communities, while also creating a new revenue stream to support the universities' activities through the sales of its sustainable development expertise.

And my time is up. Thank you again for this opportunity to present. At the conclusion of this roundtable, I would be pleased to take any questions you might have on my presentation.

Core principles of Sustainable Development Strategies

Reference:

OECD/UNDP (2002) *Sustainable Development Strategies. A Resource Book*. Earthscan, pps. 33-35 ('Key principles for developing sustainable development strategies').

1. Political support at the highest level
2. Co-ordinating body with authority.
3. Funding within a multi-year budgetary framework.
4. The strategy is a journey, not a destination, evolving with time.
5. Bottom-up, community-driven, process focused on people.
6. Participatory, inclusive, and engaging.
7. Integrate social, environmental, and economic objectives across communities / sectors, territories, and generations.
8. Capacity-building (education) and relationship-building are designed into the strategy.
9. Dispute-settlement mechanism (DSM).
10. Vision Statement.
11. Mission Statement. (*Methodology*)
12. *Realistic* Sustainability Strategic Goals & Objectives.
13. Sustainability Benchmarks & Indicators
14. Ongoing, proactive, public communications.
15. Independent audit with community feedback loop.

Explanations: Sustainability Visions, Missions, Strategic Goals & Objectives, and Benchmarks & Indicators

Sustainability Vision

Clearly states “why” a community both exists and wants to be sustainable. As the OECD has noted, a vision is important as “Strategic planning frameworks are more likely to be successful when they have a long-term vision of sustainable development with transparent objectives, and when they include clear priorities upon which stakeholders agree.” (Reference: OECD (2001) ‘Strategies for Sustainable Development: Practical Guidance for Development Co-operation’ in OECD / UNDP *Sustainable Development Strategies. A Resource Book*, London: EARTHSCAN, p.25.)

Sustainability Mission

Clearly states the methods your community will use to achieve its sustainability vision. It answers “how” your community will go about actively pursuing sustainable development.

Sustainability Strategic Goals & Objectives

These are the heart of your sustainability strategy, for they are the specific sustainability activities that your community sets out to achieve and measure. This is your “sustainability plan of action” – what your community will “do” to achieve sustainable development. In sustainable development terminology, it is often referred to as the “roadmap” for a community’s sustainable development journey. Strategies can include things related to action in: education: employment, crime, health, water supply, housing, economic diversification, transport, social justice, garbage reduction, etc.

Sustainability Benchmarks and Indicators

These help a community and its citizens understand the progress they are making on their journey toward sustainable development as pursued through their ‘sustainability strategy’. ‘Sustainability benchmarks and indicators’ are often compared to “highway signs” that show a driver the progress being made on a car journey. These can include measurable things such as community changes in: levels of spousal abuse, recycling of plastic bottles, life expectancy; completion of secondary education; infant mortality; diversification into non-tourist business activities; amount of park land for residents; availability of safe and secure public transit; suicide rates; amount of mangrove lands; etc.

Links to web-sites of sustainable development organisations, processes, models, or books

Prominent Sustainable Cities in Canada:

- Vancouver
<http://vancouver.ca/sustainability/index.htm> (English)
- Whistler (Resort Municipality of Whistler)
<http://www.whistler2020.ca/whistler/site/homepage.acds?instanceid=1930792&content=1930501> (English)

Prominent Sustainable City in Latin America

- Porto Alegre, Brasil
<http://www.portoalegre.rs.gov.br/> (Portuguese)

Sustainable Development Organisations:

- ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives)

International: <http://www.iclei.org> (English)

Mexico - <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=953> (Español)

Founded in 1990 out of the UN's *World Congress of Local Governments for a Sustainable Future*, it is an international association of 475 local governments and national and regional local government organisations that have made a commitment to sustainable development.

- International Institute for Sustainable Development
<http://www.iisd.org/>
- UN Division for Sustainable Development
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>
- UN-HABITAT
<http://www.unhabitat.org>
- UN-HABITAT *Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements*
<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?ID=924&catid=10&typeid=25&subMenuId=0>
- UN Programa 21 (LA21)
<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/spanish/agenda21sptoc.htm>
(Español)

Sustainable Development Models:

- Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
Strategic Goals & Objectives of CSUBR:
<http://www.clayoquotbiosphere.org/organization/goals.php> (English)
- Cool Mayors
“More than 400 mayors in 43 USA states are leading 66 million USA residents to action on global warming.”
<http://www.coolmayors.org/common/11061/?clientID=11061> (English)
- (The) European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign
http://www.aalborgplus10.dk/media/key_documents_2001_espa%c3%b1ol_final_09-1-2003.doc (Español)
- Fundacion Internacional de las Ciudades Saludables
<http://www.healthycities.org/> (Español)
- The Ecological Footprint
<http://www.ecologicalfootprint.com/> (English)
- The Natural Step
<http://www.naturalstep.org/com> (English)
- Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics
<http://www.vancouver2010.com/en> (English)
- UK Sustainable Development National Indicators
<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/national/index.htm> (English)
- UK Sustainable Communities Indicators
<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/national/communities.htm>
(English)

Books:

- Satterthwaite D (ed) (1999) *The Earthscan Reader in Sustainable Cities*, Earthscan.