‘Green Economy’ and Sustainable Development
from the 1992 Earth Summit to the current capitalist meltdown
REPORT-BACK FROM RIO+20

Patrick Bond - Centre for Civil Society
in the School of Built Environment and Development Studies,
University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, 2 July 2012
Major sites for neoliberal plus sustainable dev. discourses
'talk left to walk right'

Rio+10

A GIFT FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD!

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

johannesburg World Summit 2002

• Profit
• Self regulation
• Unfair trade

**Sustainable development** is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

contains within it two key concepts:

1) the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and

2) the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.
over the past 20 years [sustainable development] has often been compartmentalized as an environmental issue. Added to this, and potentially more limiting for the sustainable development agenda, is the reigning orientation of development as purely economic growth... The problem with such an approach is that natural resources are in imminent peril of being exhausted or their quality being compromised to an extent that threatens current biodiversity and natural environments... Sustainable development has found a de facto ‘home’ in climate change.
World Bank’s ‘impeccable’ logic of green capitalist pollution trade

DATE: December 12, 1991
TO: Distribution
FR: Lawrence H. Summers

‘I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that... Africa is vastly underpolluted’

(preparing for original Rio Earth Summit, secret memo of Bank chief economist Larry Summers, later US Treasury Secretary and Obama’s economic manager – full memo: www.whirledbank.org)
José Lutzenberger: "Your reasoning is perfectly logical but totally insane."

Collor fired Lutzenberger; Summers became US Treasury Secretary, President of Harvard and Obama’s economic czar.
‘Care must be taken to ensure that cities and roads, factories and farms are designed, managed, and regulated as efficiently as possible to wisely use natural resources while supporting the robust growth developing countries still need... [to move the economy] away from suboptimalities and increase efficiency – and hence contribute to short-term growth – while protecting the environment.’

not mentioned by World Bank:
* financial speculation in commodities and nature,  
* export-led growth, or  
* irrationality of so much international trade, including wasted bunker fuel for shipping

my critique posted at http://www.triplecrisis.com

May 2012
roots of crisis: long-term stagnation
uneven development in GDP growth
uneven development in GDP growth
US ‘recovery’?

new investment in US manufacturing structures

‘capital strike’

US manufacturing capacity utilisation

‘overaccumulation’

US industrial production

much longer-term decline
‘overaccumulation’ and financialisation: sources of decline in US manufacturing profits

US corporate profits derived much less from manufacturing products; much greater sources of profits came from abroad; profits also came more from returns on financial assets.

Source: Gerard Dumenil and Dominique Levy

GDP stagnation

In the first series, profits are equal to the net product minus the cost of labor, and business and profit taxes. They are divided by the net worth (total assets minus debt). For the second series, real interest is subtracted from profits, i.e., interest minus a correction for the depreciation of debt resulting from inflation.
wealthy governments’ debt reaches (political) ceiling

vast increase mainly reflects bailout of US and European banks in late 2008

Euro crisis represents shift from private to public debt
insane derivatives and ‘Quantitative Easing’ bailouts

derivatives still very risky

US Fed panics, prints money

Source: IMF, Global Financial Stability Report, April 2010
US sub-prime housing bubble and burst

S&P/Case-Shiller Home Price Indices

Both indices are back to their mid-2003 levels

Source: S&P
why are banks so desperate?

UK Climate Change Minister Greg Barker, 2010: "We want the City of London, with its unique expertise in innovative financial products, to lead the world and become the global hub for green growth finance. We need to put the sub-prime disaster behind us"
Carvier Limited: “3 million units available!!” from Brazil – the ethical alternative to carbon credits?

By Chris Lang, 6th June 2012

A company called Carvier Limited is advertising 3 million "Sustainability Credit Units" from an area of forest in Brazil. Predictably enough, REDD-Monitor had a few questions for Carvier Limited. And, perhaps just as predictably, Carvier Limited has so far not responded.

Here’s what we know so far about Carvier Limited and its "Sustainable Credit Units" from Brazil. Carvier Limited was incorporated in the UK in September 2011. The company describes itself as a "Carbon Reduction and Management Services Provider". Barnaa Nwokoro is the company director. Nwokoro is also director of another company called Tamar (London) Ltd.

On 30 March 2012, Tamar (London) Ltd was one of four companies that were "ordered into provisional liquidation by the High Court on public interest grounds" pending a court hearing on 29 June 2012. Courts appoint a provisional liquidator to avoid the risk that companies’ assets disappear before legal insolvency proceedings are completed.

The other three companies ordered into provisional liquidation were Johnnystone Limited, Brad Baker Limited and Tullerton Brown. The director of Johnnystone Limited is John Nwokoro. The director of Brad Baker Limited is Bradley Ferry, who is also a director of Tullerton Brown. Barnaa, John and Daniel Nwokoro own a total of 74% shares in Tullerton Brown.

Tullerton Brown was a commodity trader, specialising in precious metals (gold and silver) and carbon trading. In March 2012, World Finance named Tullerton Brown "Commodities Broker of the Year in Western Europe". Simon Greenspan, a broker with Tullerton Brown, accepted the award on behalf of Tullerton Brown. Here’s what Greenspan had to say about carbon trading:

"It’s an area of the market that Tullerton Brown, not only are we very excited about, we are very passionate about it. At Tullerton Brown we’ve only ever invested in areas of the market that have truly stood the test of time, such as gold and silver and property. When our analysts were looking for the next great area of growth it was fairly obvious to them. It was the planet, it was the environment. The preservation of the planet allows us at Tullerton Brown to give our clients what they truly seek, which is sustainable returns for many years to come."
Buyers beware! Green Economy investments often are ‘false solutions’

Indigenous Peoples’ Guide
FALSE SOLUTIONS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

DON'T BEfooLED!
‘Green Economy’ False Solutions: technology

• **dirty ‘clean energy’**: nuclear, ‘clean coal’, fracking shale gas, hydropower, hydrogen;
  
• **biofuels, biomass, biochar**;
  
• **Carbon Capture and Storage**; and
  
• **other whacky geoengineering gimmicks** (Genetically Modified trees; sulfates in the air to shut out the sun; iron filings in the sea to create algae blooms; artificial microbes to convert plant biomass into fuels, chemicals and products; large-scale solar reflection e.g. desert plastic-wrap)
biofuel (soya, maize) as False Solution

• Energy Negative
• Water Negative
• Production Increases Air/Water Pollution
• Drives up Energy, Food, Land Prices
• Increases Monoculture, Decreases Sustainability
• Increases Land Concentration in Fewer Hands
• Increases Power/Control by MNCs

– Howard Ehrman, Univ of Illinois

‘The shift from petroleum to biomass is, in fact, worsening climate change, increasing deforestation and biodiversity loss, degrading soils and depleting water supplies. Further, the new “bio-based” economy threatens livelihoods, especially in the global South where it encourages “land grabs”.’

- ETC Group, EcoNexus/African Biodiversity Network/Gaia, Biofuel Watch
Carbon Capture and Storage as *False Solution*

**critique:**
- violates Precautionary Principle
- costs are excessive
- increases energy to produce power by 25%
- unproven technology
- at least a decade away from implementation
- prolongs extraction of coal

- Howard Ehrman, Univ of Illinois
geoengineering False Solutions stymied?

Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya, 2010: no geoengineering activities should take place until risks to the environment and biodiversity and associated social, cultural and economic impacts have been appropriately considered.

Neth Dano, ETC Group Philippines: “Not perfect... interim definition of geoengineering is too narrow because it does not include Carbon Capture and Storage technologies... a change of course is essential, and geoengineering is clearly not the way forward.”
‘Payment for Environmental Services’?

ecosystems useful to humans:
• **storage of carbon** by soils, vegetation, and oceans,
• **habitats** for plants, animals, and micro-organisms,
• **filtering of fresh water**, and even
• **aesthetic or spiritual significance** of landscapes

- source: Kathy McAfee, SF State University
Payment for ‘Environmental Services’?

Compensating the poor and other land users for practices that maintain healthy, ‘service-producing’ ecosystems may be an important part of strategies for sustainable and equitable development. Serious problems arise, however, when such compensation schemes are framed as markets.

-Kathy McAfee, SF State University

main False Solution: global carbon market core to multilateral climate governance
can ‘global governance’ fix world crises?

recent record of elites: repeated *top-down failures*

- last solution: 1987 Montreal Protocol on CFCs (ozone hole)
  but since then:
- dominant *neoliberals* (1990s), *neoconservatives* (2000s)
World Summit on Sustainable Development

Johannesburg, 31 August 2002: 30,000 protested UN ‘type-two partnerships’, privatisation of water, emissions trading, neoliberalism
A TIMETABLE TO REDUCE EMISSIONS?!
... NOT UNTIL THERE'S MORE EVIDENCE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE!
can ‘global governance’ fix world crises?
recent record of elites: repeated *top-down failures*

- last solution: 1987 Montreal Protocol on CFCs (ozone hole)
  but since then:
  - dominant *neoliberals* (1990s), *neoconservatives* (2000s)
  - **World Bank, IMF Annual Meetings:** *trivial reforms* (Chinese voting power rising a few %, African influence remains negligible)
  - ‘Post-Washington Consensus’: *Stiglitz fired, 1999*
  - **UN Millennium Development Goal rhetoric**, 2000
  - **WTO Doha Agenda 2001:** failure
  - **Monterrey Financing for Development** summit, 2002, then **G20**
    - **global financial reregulation, 2008-09:** failure
  - renewed wars in Central Asia, Middle East, North Africa, 2001-?
  - **UN Security Council reform attempts failed, 2005**
  - **G8 aid promises** (especially for Africa) broken, 2005
  - **Kyoto Protocol on climate:** *Copenhagen Accord tragedy*
global leaders exacerbate climate crisis

Copenhagen Accord, COP 15, December 2009

• Jacob Zuma (SA)
• Lula da Silva (Brazil)
• Barack Obama (USA)
• Wen Jiabao (China)
• Manmohan Singh (India)

"they broke the UN!"
(Bill McKibbon, 350.org)

non-binding! 4 degree increase!

political will missing
COP 16
structural problem: national self-interest at UN COPs
Durban’s COP17
‘Conference of the Parties’
28 Nov-9 Dec 2011
International Convention Centre
Durban’s COP17
‘Conference of Polluters’
28 Nov-9 Dec 2011
International Convention Centre
but Durban saved Kyoto’s carbon trading gamble
world’s biggest polluter
Durban COP17: ‘Africa’s Climate Summit’

confirmed climate-related deaths of 180 million Africans (Christian Aid estimate)
carbon subimperialism

and carbon neoliberalism
carbon trading gamble: in 1997, US vice-president Al Gore (later a carbon trader) pushed for Kyoto to include emissions markets in exchange for Washington’s support (promise broken by 95-0 vote in US Senate, 1998)

Gore continued to fib: ‘The European Union has adopted this US innovation and is making it work effectively there.’ (An Inconvenient Truth, p. 252)
impossible to finance renewable energy with such low carbon prices

does EU carbon trading ‘work effectively’?

emissions market crashes, 2008-12
2009 VAT fraud, 2010 resale fraud, 2011 theft-closure
The Bavarian Stock Exchange will cease its emissions certificate trading operations on 30 June 2012. After the volume of trading on European stock exchanges has plunged to practically zero in recent months, emissions trading lacks the preconditions necessary to establish liquid trading operations. Numerous reasons have been cited for the decline, ranging from the waves of emissions certificate theft and VAT fraud that devastated the image of emissions trading to the plunge in trading prices when a glut of largely free certificates swamped the market. "In its present form, emissions trading is not accepted by the market. Given the situation in Brussels, the uncertainty caused by the Eurozone debt crisis and the gloomy economic prospects ahead, we do not anticipate that politicians will take rapid action to adjust framework conditions", stated Dr. Christine Bortenlänger, Director of Bayerische Börse AG. http://www.bayerische-boerse.de/greenmarket/presse.html
how is carbon trading affecting Africa?

The CDM in Africa Cannot Deliver the Money

Why the carbon trading gamble and ‘Clean Development Mechanism’ won’t save the planet from climate change, and how African civil society is resisting

A report by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society (SA) and Dartmouth College Climate Justice Research Project (USA)

http://cdmscannotdeliver.wordpress.com
how does carbon trading work in Brazil?

in Minas Gerais, Plantar’s ‘green desert’ plantation

alien-invasive trees grow 10 years, then die and become charcoal for pig-iron, for Brazilian auto industry
Mt Elgon (Uganda) villagers stand amid corn planted on what the government says is national park, but which they claim has belonged to them for generations. To plant the corn, the villagers chopped down trees planted by the Dutch FACE Foundation as part of a carbon trading project.
Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation

REDD-type projects have already caused land grabs, killings, violent evictions and forced displacement, violations of human rights, threats to cultural survival, militarization and servitude

- Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network
“the system should be decommissioned and at minimum, a moratorium be placed on further crediting until the profound structural and implementation flaws are confronted. The damage done by CDMs to date should be included in calculations of the ‘climate debt’ that the North owes the South, with the aim of having victims of CDMs compensated appropriately.”
A TIMETABLE TO REDUCE EMISSIONS?!... NOT UNTIL THERE'S MORE EVIDENCE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE!
can ordinary people trust bilateral institutions?
I worry the corporates have too much say...
North owes ecological debt!

I was in Namibia.
We did a kind of tour. Sort of like fly and drive.
The debt of nations and the distribution of ecological impacts from human activities

U. Thara Srinivasan\textsuperscript{a,b}, Susan P. Carey\textsuperscript{c}, Eric Hallstein\textsuperscript{d}, Paul A. T. Higgins\textsuperscript{d,e}, Amber C. Kerr\textsuperscript{d}, Laura E. Koteen\textsuperscript{d}, Adam B. Smith\textsuperscript{d}, Reg Watson\textsuperscript{f}, John Harte\textsuperscript{g,h}, and Richard B. Norgaard\textsuperscript{d}

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As human impacts to the environment accelerate, disparities in the distribution of damages between rich and poor nations mount. Globally, environmental change is dramatically affecting the flow of ecosystem services, but the distribution of ecological damages and their driving forces has not been estimated. Here, we conservatively estimate the environmental costs of human activities over 1961–2000 in six major categories (climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, agricultural intensification and expansion, deforestation, overfishing, and mangrove conversion), quantitatively connecting costs borne by poor, middle-income, and rich nations to specific activities by each of these groups. Adjusting impact valuations for different standards of living across the groups as commonly practiced, we find striking imbalances. Climate change and ozone depletion impacts predicted for low-income nations have been overwhelmingly driven by emissions from the other two groups, a pattern also observed for overfishing damages indirectly driven by the consumption of fishery products. Indeed, through disproportionate emissions of greenhouse gases alone, the rich group may have imposed climate damages on the poor group greater than the latter’s current foreign debt. Our analysis provides \textit{prima facie} evidence for an uneven distribution pattern of damages across income groups. Moreover, our estimates of each group’s share in various damaging activities are independent from controversies in environmental valuation methods. In a world increasingly connected ecologically and economically, our analysis is thus an early step toward reframing issues of environmental responsibility, development, and globalization in accordance with ecological costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Direct or indirect driver</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>Greenhouse gas emissions (\textit{carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratospheric ozone-layer depletion</td>
<td>Chlorofluorocarbon emissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural intensification and expansion</td>
<td>Consumption of agricultural goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deforestation</td>
<td>Consumption of agricultural goods and fishery products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who owes in 2000?
GHG/capita by country

Australia
USA
Saudi Arabia
Canada
Kazakhstan
Russia
who loses from climate change?
a ‘Climate Demography Vulnerability Index’

main losers:
• Central America and Caribbean
• Andes and Amazon
• Central/South Asia and Middle East
• SubSaharan Africa
• Southeast Asia and small islands

Geographic disparities and moral hazards in the predicted impacts of climate change on human populations

J. Samson¹, D. Berteaux², B. J. McGill² and M. M. Humphries¹
Instead of Kyoto Protocol cap and trade, Montreal Protocol success: ‘cap and ban’
according to Jomo K.S. of the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs

• Example of inclusive multilateralism for reduction of ozone-depleting substances (ODS)
• Parties moved rapidly to reduce ODS
• Paid nearly all net costs of compliance for developing countries ...
• Costs lower, benefits higher than anticipated
what is ‘climate justice’?

core principles from Rights of Mother Earth conference, Cochabamba, Bolivia (April 2010)

• **50 percent reduction** of greenhouse gas emissions by 2017
• **stabilising temperature rises to 1C and 300 Parts Per Million**

• **acknowledging the climate debt** owed by developed countries (6% of GDP)
  • full respect for Human Rights and the inherent rights of indigenous people
  • universal declaration of Mother Earth rights to ensure harmony with nature
  • establishment of an International Court of Climate Justice

• **rejection of carbon markets, and REDD’s commodified nature and forests**
  • promotion of change in consumption patterns of developed countries
  • end of intellectual property rights for climate technologies
One million climate jobs

Solving the economic and environmental crises

UK labor’s search for ‘Just Transition’

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Making renewable electricity 425,000 jobs
Renovating buildings 175,000 jobs
Changing transport 300,000 jobs
Industry and landfill 50,000 jobs
Education 50,000 jobs

Total 1,000,000 jobs

£27 billion in wages for one million jobs over one year.
£5 billion in employers’ national insurance and pension contributions.
£20 billion in costs like materials, fuel, supplies, rent and interest.
Total cost £52 billion
vital need for SA ‘Million Climate Jobs’ campaign, so metalworkers get ‘Just Transition’: guaranteed, well-paid jobs in public/community renewable sector that help society and save the planet

http://www.climatejobs.org.za
CJ movement: *leave the oil in the soil, the coal in the hole, the tarsand in the land, and the fracking shale-gas in our earth’s ass*

- Niger Delta women, Environmental Rights Action, MEND halted majority of oil exploitation, 2008
- Canada: Alberta anti-tarsands green and indigenous activists, and Quebecois versus shale-gas
- British Climate Camp (Crude Awakening) block Coryton oil refinery, 2010 – MI5 spy couldn’t crack it
- Australian Rising Tide regularly block Newcastle coal exports
- Norwegian environmentalists and Attac win against state oil company in Lofoten region, 2011
- Ecuador’s Amazon indigenous activists + Accion Ecologica halt oil drilling in Yasuni National Park
- stopping US King Coal: Mountain Top Removal nearly halted in Appalachia; Navajo Nation forced cancellation of Black Meza (Arizona) mine permit against world’s largest coal company, Peabody; Powder River Basin (MN, WY) farmers and ranchers fight coal expansion
- denuclear US coal energy: nearly all 151 proposed new coal power plants in Bush Energy Plan cancelled, abandoned or stalled since 2007; key community forces: Indigenous Environmental Network, Energy Justice Network and Western Mining Action Network, plus Sierra legal team
- preventing incinerators: since 2000, no new waste incinerators (more carbon-intensive than coal and leading source of cancer-causing dioxins)
  - Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, Detroit victory, world wastepickers movement
- defeating Chevron expansion in Richmond, CA
- undamming Mega Hydro at Klamath River: indigenous communities defeat Pacificorp Power
- building resilient communities through local action: frontline communities winning campaigns linking climate justice to basic survival
  - e.g., Oakland Climate Action Coalition opposes climate disruption, promotes Just Transition
new measurements: against GDP

MISSING FROM GDP:

- resource depletion (crucial to extractivism)
- air, water, and noise pollution
- loss of farmland and wetlands
- unpaid women’s/community work
- family breakdown, crime
- other social values

Genuine Progress Indicator

towards Buen Vivir?
but will divisions continue between greens and reds?
GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL APARTHEID

if we continue to fail...

GLOBAL APARTHEID

APARTHEID
David Harvey
The Crises of Capitalism
26th April, 2010

Is it time to look beyond capitalism towards a new social order?

Central argument: crisis displaced but not resolved by
‘schatio-temporal fixes’ and ‘accumulation by dispossession’

‘shifting, stalling, stealing’
at the Centre for Civil Society, we don’t agree, so we helped make a film (1.5 million views): www.storyofcapandtrade.org
New Film by *Story of Stuff* Creator Offers Provocative, Humorous Look at CAP & TRADE on Eve of Copenhagen Summit

The *Story of Cap & Trade*: Why you can’t solve a problem with the thinking that created it.


Hosted by Annie Leonard, creator of the viral video hit *The Story of Stuff*, (viewed worldwide over 8 million times), the *Story of Cap & Trade* is the first in a series of six short films the Story of Stuff Project is releasing over the coming year with Free Range Studios (www.freerangestudios.com) and more than a dozen of the world’s leading sustainability organizations.

*The Story of Cap & Trade* takes a provocative but humorous look at cap and trade, the leading climate solution under consideration in Copenhagen and on Capitol Hill. Employing the same urgent honesty that made *The Story of Stuff* so successful — and flash animation that makes it clear who wins and who loses — *The Story of Cap & Trade* points to the ‘devils in the details’ in current cap and trade proposals: free permits to big polluters, fake carbon offsets and, most importantly, distraction from the significant tasks at hand in tackling the climate crisis.

[www.storyofcapandtrade.org](http://www.storyofcapandtrade.org)
Can global warming be mitigated by carbon trading?

With climate change posing perhaps the gravis threat to humanity in coming decades, and with free market economics still hegemonic, it is little wonder how much effort has gone into creating a carbon market, no matter how much evidence has recently emerged about its flaws.

South Africa, a revealing pilot site, has initiated carbon trading projects with adverse economic, environmental and social impacts. South Africa pollutes at a rate twenty times higher than even the United States of America, measured by CO₂ emissions generated by each GDP dollar per person, so the idea of trading for carbon reductions is seductive – and potentially lucrative. Current state policy is supportive and a former environment minister is a market promoter, alongside the World Bank, the Dutch government and big oil companies.

Editors Patrick Bond, Rehana Dada and Graham Erion of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the TransNational Institute have assembled this cutting-edge collection to highlight the urgent situation.

"The most destructive effect of the carbon offset trade is that it allows us to believe we can carry on polluting. This crucially-needed book provides ample evidence of the trade’s other dangers to “beneficiaries”, with case studies of fraud, accounting tricks and maltreatment of people and the environment."

George Monbiot, Guardian columnist and author of Heat

"As representatives of people’s movements and independent organisations, we reject the claim that carbon trading will halt the climate crisis. This crisis has been caused more than anything else by the mining of fossil fuels and the release of their carbon to the oceans, air, soil and living things. This excessive burning of fossil fuels is now jeopardising Earth’s ability to maintain a liveable climate."

"Climate Justice Now! The Durban Declaration on Carbon Trading"
Durban's Climate Gamble
Trading Carbon, Betting the Earth

Durban, South Africa: a city of immense beauty but also a city with deep environmental scars caused by industrial giants and insensitive government – and in late 2011, host for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change summit, the COP 17.

This book takes the reader on a journey from Durban's apartheid roots to its jaded present, passing cultural icons and political battles, narrating socio-economic and environmental conflict and the reinvention of the city's traditions of resistance. In this context we can understand why the COP 17 represents a vast climate gamble: will carbon markets solve the crisis? Or will Durban be remembered as a 'Conference of Polluters'?

A team of critical sociologists, geographers, historians, political economists and activists reflect on Durban's political ecology, global climate policy and COP politics. They trace environmental injustices locally, and consider what will come of the Kyoto Protocol globally, as the COP17 puts faith in market solutions for market problems – recklessly betting on the earth's future.

The editor, Patrick Bond, directs the University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society. He is joined by Ashwin Desai, Joel Kovel, Larry Lohmann, Oscar Reyes, Khadija Sharife, the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance, Yash Tandon, Goolam Vahed and Del Weston.
Politics of Climate Justice

Patrick Bond

Politics of Climate Justice
Paralysis Above, Movement Below

This is an indispensable read for anyone who seeks to understand world leaders’ responses to climate change through the United Nations’ Conference of the Parties (COP). Patrick Bond provides vital background and theoretical context to what happened at the COPs of Kyoto, Copenhagen, Cancún and Durban. He explores the favoured strategies of key elites from the crisis-ridden global and national power blocs, including South Africa, and finds them incapable of reconciling the threat to the planet with their economies’ addiction to fossil fuels. Finally, the book reveals sites of climate justice and interrogates the new movement’s approach.

‘A very valuable contribution to scholarship. The originality of the book lies in what Patrick Bond calls ‘climate-crisis capitalism’ – a brilliant and original notion. The central theme is that global elites are failing to deal with the threat of climate change and so effective action depends on pressure from civil society led by the climate justice movement.’

— Jacklyn Cock, Professor Emeritus, University of the Witwatersrand

University of KwaZulu-Natal Press
www.ukznpress.co.za

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leave the oil in the soil?

Yasuni ITT in Ecuador’s Amazon rainforest
Yasuni ITT in Ecuador’s Amazon rainforest

Oilwatch research trip to Yasuni, July 2011

oil here = 407 mn tons of CO2
Accion Ecologica, Quito

eco-feminist-indigenous defence of Yasuni

http://www.accionecologica.org/

selling out Ecuador's Yasuni Proposal

The government of Ecuador raised intriguing questions about Payments for Ecosystem Services a few years back when it offered to avoid drilling for oil in exchange for a carbon payment equal to just half the income the country would earn if it fired up the rigs at then-prevailing prices...

[Environment Minister] Kakabadse is undeterred, and contends that tapping carbon markets to compensate the country for the avoided emissions would be as lucrative as the oil market, once environmental and infrastructure costs associated with drilling are considered. "In every sense," she says, Ecuador would "win with the carbon market more than with the oil market.

"Capital from carbon markets is the only serious alternative to oil revenue, according to Roque Sevilla, president of the Yasuni commission. Depending on future oil prices and the resulting fluctuation in forgone oil revenue, payments into a Yasuni trust fund could ultimately total $4 to $12 billion, and "such amounts cannot be obtained from donations or development aid from allies."

Germany to pull out of Ecuador's Yasuni initiative?
By Chris Lang, 22nd September 2010

Ecuador plans to leave almost a billion barrels of oil in the ground at the Yasuni National Park, in return for US$3.6 billion or about half the market value of the oil. It’s been hailed as “The world’s first really big oil deal”. In 2008, the German Parliament agreed to support the Yasuni initiative. But now Germany’s Minister for Economic Development and Cooperation, Dirk Niebel, says Germany “will not consider payment into the trust fund”.

The Yasuni initiative applies to an area of 175,000 hectares of some of the most biodiverse rainforest on the planet, home to two of the world’s last remaining uncontacted indigenous groups: the Tagaeri and the Taromenane. Others, the Shuar, Waorani, and Kichwa, only recently came into contact with the modern world. Under the initiative, 846 million barrels of oil would be kept permanently underground, avoiding the emission of 407 million metric tonnes of CO2.

In August 2010, the UN Development Programme signed an agreement with the Ecuadorian government. Under the agreement, UNDP would be an independent administrator of the trust fund, the network of universities would monitor the project and the government would auction the certificates.

WARNING from UNDP: “The Government will issue Yasuni Guarantee Certificates for sale to private and/or public entities in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through avoidance of oil and gas extractions from megabiodiverse areas that are highly socially and environmentally sensitive”