

AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

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AGS White Paper: There is No Downside To Sustainability

Description: The American Geographical Society has released a White Paper, A Geographical Framework for Sustainable Development, which offers leaders in the public sector and private enterprise a geographically inspired long-term plan for confronting sustainability challenges facing the planet.

[New York City, NY] – [June 8, 2017] — The American Geographical Society (AGS) has released a White Paper entitled, *A Geographical Framework for Sustainable Development*. The White Paper provides leaders in the public sector and private enterprise a geographically informed, necessary, and long-term approach for confronting the environmental changes the planet is facing and will face in decades to come. With critical ecosystems increasingly under threat, conserving and restoring these ecosystems is key to promoting a sustainable future for humankind. Industry, science, government, and the social sector must come together to understand and implement the moral, economic, and national security solutions required for conserving and restoring such critical ecosystems.

“Whether one supports the Paris Agreement on climate change or not, and whether one believes change is linear or cyclical, we are faced with an existential threat to the human habitat as we know it today.” said Joseph Wood, Geographer and former Provost, University of Baltimore. “Understanding what is happening to our habitat, and what we can do and should do about it, is essential to the future for my grandchildren and yours,” added Dr. Wood, who also edited the White Paper.

A Framework for Sustainable Development starts from the fact that human habitats will continue to undergo great stresses and change in future decades as a result of natural processes and human use of the Earth. How we respond could be positive if existing challenges are addressed wisely, or negative if ignored. We can begin by understanding the risk we face in ignoring how environmental systems work at a variety of interconnected scales and how aggressive human intervention can offset the most severe impacts of these changes. The solution is sustainable development—a moral imperative with economic and social benefits as well as positive human and national security outcomes. AGS emphasizes thinking geographically as the first step in understanding how we must proceed.

Dr. John Konarski, CEO of AGS added, “In light of President Trump’s decision to withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement, the innate desire to leave our planet in a state that does not compromise the livelihoods of future generations, is one that we can all share. No matter which position you take on the issue, developing sustainably is of the utmost importance and AGS is eager to inject objective and critical geographical consideration into the discussion and debate.”

[Click here to read the entire framework, titled “AGS Envisioning A Sustainable Planet: A Framework for Sustainable Development.”](#)

The American Geographical Society (AGS) is a 21st century learning society dedicated to the advancement of geographic thinking, knowledge, and understanding across business, government, academe, social sectors, and most importantly with teachers and students. Established in 1851, AGS is the oldest professional geographical organization in the United States. It is recognized worldwide as a pioneer in geographical research and education for over 166 years. The mission of AGS is to advance and promote geography in business, government, science, and education. Our goal is to enhance the nation’s geographic literacy so as to engender sound public policy, national security, and human well-being worldwide. AGS seeks to engage the American public, from its youngest to its oldest citizens, with new and amazing ways to understand and characterize our changing world. The Society maintains its headquarters in New York City.

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A Sustainability White Paper

Envisioning A Sustainable Planet: A Geographical Framework for Sustainable Development

Based on the AGS 2016 Fall Symposium, Geography 2050:
Envisioning A Sustainable Planet held at Columbia University

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