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Mitigating the Davos dilemma: towards a global self-sustainability index

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ABSTRACT

The 'Davos dilemma' posits a sustainability crisis, provoked by rising human population and intense competitive behaviours, in terms of control and access to depleting natural resources. More broadly understood as an ecological problem, rather than just socio-economic behavioural deficiencies, the call is for better integrated social, natural and business-indexed reporting within planetary boundaries. This poses challenges for nationally governed societies to equitably account for self-sustainability performance, in enabling their successive government agendas to re-orientate policies and industry investments as innovation towards achieving this in the longer term. We propose and

test a global self-sustainability index for countries across four metrics: economic, environmental, social and innovation. Our tentative findings from a cross-country analysis of 27 countries during 2007–2010 illustrate the approach for wider systematic analysis and as a basis for future large-scale assessments on self-sustainability within and between countries.

KEYWORDS:

Davos dilemma | economic- | environmental- | social-performance | innovation | global self-sustainability index

Disclosure statement

Ouarda Dsouli, Dr Khan and Prof Kakabadse are responsible for the conception and design of the study, the acquisition and analysis of the data as well as for drafting and approving the final version of the article. Dr Skouloudis offered his input in data interpretation (i.e. concluding remarks) and in critically revising the article.

Notes

1. Member-based organisation.

2. Chinese govt. has $4 trillion cash (2014), and China has the largest number of millionaires/billionaires globally.

3. Gap between rich (urban) and poor (rural) has increased in 2013. http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/rich-poor-gap-widens-in-india-113081000072_1.html.

4. Brexit in UK and Donald Trump’s win in the 2016 US election.

5. Top five US corporations have $400 billion cash (2014).

6. ICPD Beyond 2014 Review, https://www.unfpa.org/public/home/sitemap/ICPDReport.

7. The car industry did not exist before the car was invented; it was a problem needing a solution at that time.

8. Rare earth metals (REMs) are vital for the production of all high tech products that range from simple electronics, mobile phones and computers to military weapons markets.

9. Agenda 21 is the UN Action Plan related to sustainable development and was the outcome of UN Conference held in Rio 1992.

10. GRI Framework and ISO26000.

11. http://www.euro.centre.org/.

12. Economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic.

13. NASA Socioeconomic Data and Applications Center – Pilot EPI Trend. http://sedac.ciesin.columbia.edu/data/set/epi-environmental-performance-index-pilot-trend-2012.

14. Net food (% of net merchandise) is calculated as follows:Net food (% of net merchandise) = Food exports (% of merchandise exports) – Food imports (% of merchandise exports).

15. Public debt for Bangladesh has been compiled from The Economist (2013).

16. Public debt for Bangladesh has been compiled from The Economist (2013).

17. 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014.

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