

Land Ownership and Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

The terms ownership and sustainability are in many ways incompatible. Most owners would, without restrictions, exploit their land without consideration for sustainability.

The cause and effect of development should be considered when sustainability in the context of land and its use becomes a priority. There is a need to apply pressure on land owners to achieve sustainable development showing that the benefits gained by such actions far outweigh the costs, while benefiting the rest of society in the process. The process could be subtle where owners would be complimented and rewarded for their positive actions, or at the other extreme where they would be severely fined for the damage they cause by exploiting resources.

The issue of who owns land and what control a government can impose on the owners must be determined, as must a clear definition of sustainable development. Too often governments clearly define the rights of ownership without considering or defining the responsibilities of these land owners.

There is an ongoing crisis in the world where the exploitation of land and the resources it contains continues, often unchecked by the government agencies, together with a matching lack of responsibility from the owners. Too often land is exploited for short-term gain without consideration of the damage caused and its impact on the environment in the long term, let alone that land use choice becomes more limited in the long term.

This paper will set out the responsibility that land ownership imposes and the means by which a government can impose methods to achieve sustainable development on the owners of land within their country.

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