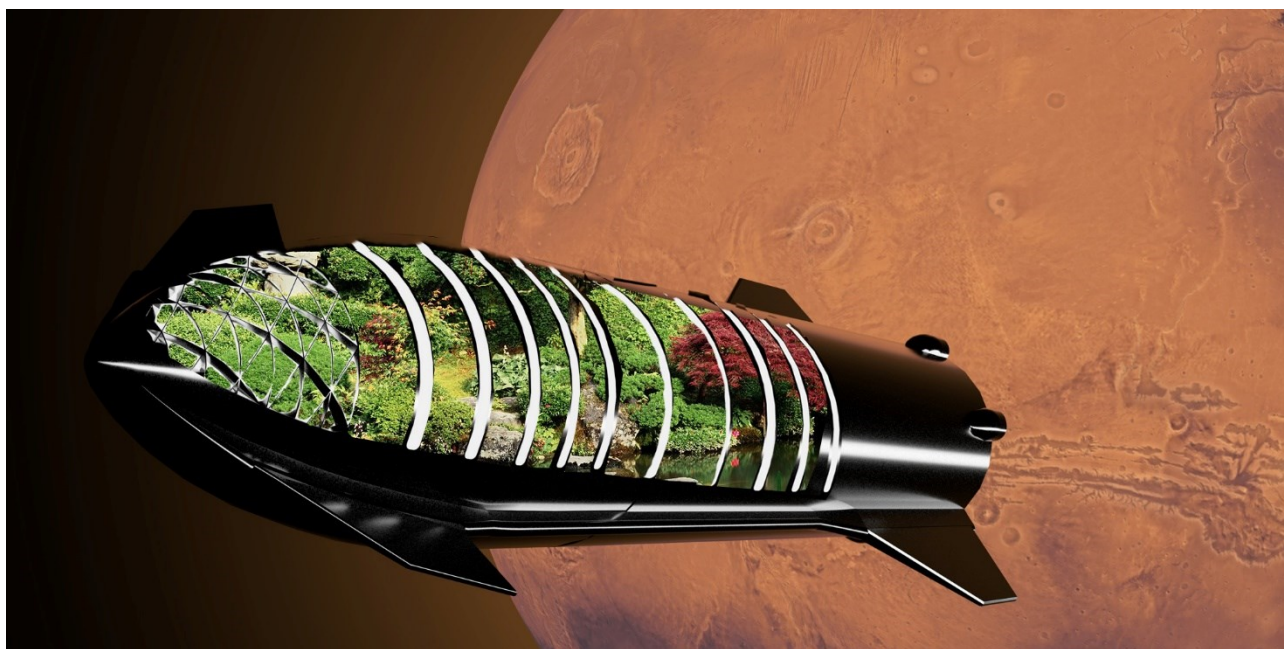


# TRUE SUSTAINABILITY – WHAT IS IT?



#SPACE18SDG NEWSLETTER – May 19<sup>th</sup> 2023

by Adriano V. Autino

This week we kick-off a cycle of (tentatively) weekly newsletters, each one developing an aspect of our proposal of an 18<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goal, to be added to the U.N. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The alliance for #Space18SDG is growing daily, and currently consists of 20 organizations, including (together with Space Renaissance International) some of the biggest and most influential space advocacy organizations: the National Space Society, The Mars Society, the Lifeboat Foundation, the Space Tourism Society, the Beyond Earth Institute, the Human Space Program (see [the complete list](#)). In this first issue, Adriano V. Autino, the founder of Space Renaissance International, briefly discusses the concept of a true sustainability.

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The popular concept of sustainability, as presented in mainstream narrations, is primarily focused on environmental sustainability. From the standpoint of so-called “green-transitions”, many policies are conceived in accordance with environmental requirements - primarily related to the mitigation of climate change and environmental pollution. Leaving aside the diatribe regarding the causes of climate change (whether anthropic or not), we need to understand the true quality of the ongoing measures undertaken, as well as what will be needed to succeed.

First of all, environmental sustainability – though important – shouldn’t be the only criteria when conceiving new policies. Social sustainability should also be considered – and at least at the same level of priority. The wording “Sustainable Development” was used to formalize the U.N. 2030 Agenda. This title could not eschew referencing “development”, as the U.N. General Assembly (in 1986) approved a declaration in which the right to development was recognized as a universal civil right<sup>1</sup>. Development is essential to help achieve all of the social goals. Without economic growth, any sustainable development agenda will not succeed. Notwithstanding this evident condition, all “green transition” policies simply conjugate the concept of sustainability as a “de-growthist strategy” - i.e., reducing human activities on Earth in order to decrease our ecological footprint on this planet. This insane strategy doesn’t address the inevitable collateral damage:

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Development/DeclarationRightDevelopment\\_en.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Development/DeclarationRightDevelopment_en.pdf)

human civilization would rapidly decay and implode. Moreover, reducing scientific and technological efforts will not solve the environmental issues, but just exacerbate them.

Secondly, do the measures undertaken address the needs, even if only from an environmental standpoint? Definitely not. According to the “green doctrine”, we should be reducing travel, and use more electronic means to communicate, work, study, inform, and entertain ourselves. Yet, a “web society” demands more electric energy, not less. “Electric mobility” will also exponentially increase energy demands. The electronic components – embedded in every artifacts, from cars to any “intelligent” device – require huge quantities of rare raw materials, including the so-called “rare earths”. And this will replace oil, as a catalyst for new “resource wars”. The disposal of exhaust car batteries and other technological waste will constitute another big issue, increasing environmental pollution. The primary point here is that any industrial development, if confined to Earth’s boundaries, will inevitably exacerbate existing environmental issues (and possibly launch new ones!).

Of course, other considerations should also be on the table, when our “sorcerer’s apprentices” start to play with human anthropological behaviors (e.g. about “staying at home”). During the most acute phases of the Covid19 pandemic, we have seen how devastating social confinement can be for civilization: all of our social relationships have rapidly decayed, young people have been demotivated and left schools, people haven’t met or fallen in love, and many have lost enthusiasm for working together. Human society seemed to be condemned. True social sustainability must at minimum encompass several dimensions: environmental, social, economic, and cultural. The common factor in all of these dimensions is development. The U.N. 2030 Agenda recognized this (in theory), but unfortunately failed to provide an efficient strategy (in practice) for development. All of the key indicators clearly demonstrate that no sustainable development is possible if confined to the limits of our home planet.

Truly sustainable development is only possible in outer space – using lunar and asteroid resources, reprocessing orbital debris, and harvesting solar energy directly in space. This is a different approach to “sustainable” development – and a feasible one. The 18<sup>th</sup> SDG – “Space for All, on Earth and Beyond” – will be a very powerful engine, to help moving ahead all of the remaining 17 SDGs.

### **12 June 2023: An 18th SDG: Space for All, on Earth and Beyond**

During the 1<sup>st</sup> #Space18SDG virtual event, all of the promoters will provide their “why” humanity needs an 18<sup>th</sup> SDG. Follow the livestream on the Space Renaissance Youtube channel:

<https://youtube.com/live/A5CAyaNI7GI>

**Click ‘going’ to the Facebook event:**

<https://www.facebook.com/events/768080504967832/>

Sign the #Space18SDG pledge: <https://www.change.org/space18sdg>

Add your organization to the promoters group: <https://spacerenaissance.space/sign-the-18th-sdg/>

Please don’t forget to support the Space Renaissance:

**Join the SRI Crew:** <https://spacerenaissance.space/membership/international-membership-registration/>

**Donate some money:** <https://spacerenaissance.space/donate-to-space-renaissance/>

**Watch and subscribe the Space Renaissance YouTube channel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/@spacerenaissance>