

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Sustainable development

Humanity is on a “highway to climate hell,” UN secretary general Antonio Guterres told delegates at last week’s climate summit, known as Cop27, in Egypt.

“We are in the fight of our lives and we are losing ... And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible.”

Guterres is not exaggerating, but unfortunately, we’ve heard it all before — and ignored it. Plenty of bloviating, not nearly enough action.

For decades, the gospel of growth has put the human race on a collision course with catastrophe. We have too many people consuming too many resources for the earth to support, leading to the collapse of civilization as we know it.

Days before the Cop27 summit began, one of the first economists to point out this dilemma died in Richmond, Virginia at the age of 84.



**HERMAN DALY**

Herman Daly, a longtime ecological economist at the World Bank, warned that the classic model of economic growth was not sustainable in a planet with finite resources.

The economy

does not exist apart from the Earth’s biosphere but within it, he said. The economy’s scale is limited by its reliance on natural resources.

These observations may seem like common sense, but they have been thoroughly rejected in practice.

Daly proposed a “steady state” economy, which seeks a stable balance between supporting human life and preserving the environment.

He compared the unlimited growth model,

for centuries our standard practice, to an airplane, which must constantly move forward or it will crash.

A “steady state” economy is like a “helicopter, which is designed to stand still, like a hummingbird.”

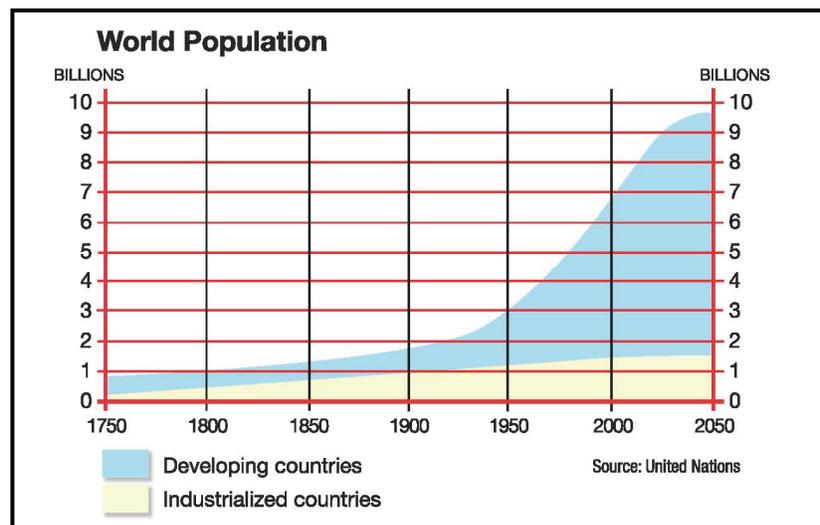
He proposed measuring an economy not just by adding goods and services produced, but also factoring in the ecological harms created.

Locally, that means people should seek happiness and fulfillment without oversized houses on big lots, constant driving and acres of parking lots, the use of trucks and SUVs for routine travel, and the consumption of mounds of plastic which end up in landfills and the ocean.

Less can be more, and also better.



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton



***Skyrocketing world population and the rise of resource consumption in developing countries are putting a tremendous strain on the carrying capacity of the earth. These trends are not sustainable.***