

THE GREEN ECONOMY IN RELATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY

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DECLARATION

The research project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree
in any other university.

Signature

Rosebella Hashimoto

Date

This research project has been submitted for examination with my permission as University
Supervisor

Signature

Dr. Patrick Maluki

Date

Dedication

I dedicate this project to my three favourite and most important people in my life, my mother, brother and sister. I love you! Also, in memory of my late father.

Acknowledgement

There are a lot of people without whom this project might not have been written, and to whom I am greatly indebted.

I would like to sincerely thank my supervisor, Dr. Patrick Maluki who has been of great help and encouragement through this process. I also would like to thank the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies as well as the University of Nairobi for pushing me to do my best in my studies.

To my mother, brother and sister who have been a constant source of support and encouragement all throughout my life, I love you! Thank you for being the best family and helping me to be the best I can be.

And to my friends, thank you for keeping up with me and my times of crises, as well as encouraging me each step of the way.

Abstract

This project critically examines whether or not the Green Economy can be an effective tool in promoting diplomatic relations among states despite the various socio-economic challenges they face. The objectives of the study is to understand what the concept of the Green Economy means and how would it promote the new way of doing business as opposed the more “brown economy”. It also aims at understanding what role the Green Economy plays in environmental diplomacy as it is concerned with promoting development whilst protecting the environment. This will naturally have challenges and so the study analyses some of these challenges not only with the concept but how it affects environmental diplomacy. This is examined with a realist point of view whereby scholars such as Machiavelli and Morgenthau argue that states will do anything to survive and get ahead in the international community. Not only do such interactions provide a platform on which states can outdo each other but it is also a way in which they can come together to ensure that their interests are met. Most of the research undertaken was from published books, articles, journals as well as relevant news articles. From this project, it is clear to see that the states are working together to preserve themselves economically as well as in terms of development. The Green Economy, while a great idea is difficult in some aspects to implement. This is because the world economy is a competitive and cutthroat arena in which countries feel the pressure from their citizens as well as the rest of the world to do better or in some cases to be the best. Many are reluctant to turn to a “green” way of soing things simply because it will push them back in terms of development. Some of the developing countries feel that they are on the short end of the stick whereby they are being forced to slow down the rate at which they are developing. This creates tension, which hinders environmental diplomacy to thrive. Based on these findings it is recommended that the Green Economy be more inclusive in terms of implementation as well as consider indigenou methods of environmental preservation that could bring about a more successful way of “selling” the Green Economy to the locals who will in turn push the policy makers to implement it. The Green Economy is a great premise to solving the world’s environmental as well as developmental challenges, but more can be done to refine this concept to make the goals a reality.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1. Background of the study

When one thinks of diplomacy, their mind immediately goes to the international community. For most people, they think of embassies and the United Nations. The United Nations is perhaps the most well known symbol of the international community coming together for common causes. Be it security, peace building missions, human rights and refugee missions; the United Nations is involved in all these things. According to Magalhães in his book 'The Pure Concept of Diplomacy', it is an instrument of foreign policy to establish peaceful contacts between the holders of political power of two states¹. When one examines historical interactions among states, it is evident that diplomatic ties were established especially through sending of diplomats to the respective states. In the modern world, this is still done, but more so in the United Nations² platform. This is a platform where all Member States have equal voting rights and have a voice to speak out on issues they feel need to be tackled internationally.

One area that has been coming up more and more is the area of the environment. This has become a crucial dimension in diplomacy because the environment is something that transcends borders. It is also from where resources are found and these are crucial in the socio-economic wellbeing of a state.

¹ Jose Magalhães. Pure Diplomacy

² The United Nations is an intergovernmental organization that was created as a replacement of the League of Nations in 1945.

The biophysical environment is defined as the biotic³ and abiotic⁴ surrounding of an organism or population, and consequently includes the factors that have an influence in their survival, development and evolution. The biophysical environment can vary in scale from microscopic to global in extent.⁵ It can also be subdivided according to its attributes. Examples include the marine environment, the atmospheric environment and the terrestrial environment. The number of biophysical environments is countless, given that each living organism has its own environment. It is important to note that the boundaries that separate a state in a map do not physically exist on the ground. This means that the environment and its organisms freely traverse the boundaries set by man. It is because of this that dialogue between states is necessary in finding ways of fairly using and protecting these natural resources.

This is where environmental diplomacy comes in. In order to help solve some of the challenges faced by the various states in the different continents, there has been a proposal for countries to adopt the Green Economy concept in order to build the economies of the state while at the same time, doing more to protect the fast dwindling natural resources.

The depletion of these resources poses as a challenge in all factors of life that is the socio-economic and environmental dimensions of life. This is where the green economy concept comes in. It aims to protect the environment and reduce the negative effects that are currently being felt by the world. These include issues such as climate change, the pollution of fresh waters and marine water with plastics and the ozone layer depletion but to mention a few;

³ Relating to, or resulting from living things, especially in their ecological relations.

⁴ Physical rather than biological; not derived from living organisms.

⁵ Kemp, David Walker (1998). Environment Dictionary. London, UK: Routledge.

while at the same time promoting economic and social development. How effective this concept is in encouraging dialogue among states when dealing with environmental issues is what this paper aims to examine.

1.1. Research problem

There is a challenge of promoting environmental diplomacy using the green economy concept, which unfortunately has a 'one size fits all' approach. Because of this, there arise challenges on how, if at all, this concept can be effective enough in propagating environmental diplomacy.

Diplomacy in itself is a precarious activity that calls for diplomats to be skillful in their negotiation with each other. It is inevitable that deals are made where one party gains at the expense on another; however, the environment is not something that can be easily bargained away. The boundaries that exist have exacerbated the challenges that face environmental diplomacy. Trees that grow in forests, wild animals as well as minerals do not follow the man-made boundaries. It is because of this that environmental diplomacy is quite a sensitive issue. The environment is in the literal sense the core of many economies worldwide. The problem therefore is, will the Green Economy be truly effective in promoting diplomatic relations among states and will it be able to solve the socio-economic challenges they face?

1.2. Objectives

General Objectives

The general objective is to examine how effective the green economy concept is in promoting environmental diplomacy.

Specific Objectives

The secondary objectives of this study is to find out:

1. To examine the concept of green economy and how it promotes a new way of doing business.
2. To discuss the role of green economy in environmental diplomacy.
3. To analyze the challenges of green economy in promoting environmental diplomacy.

1.3. Justification

In order to better understand this concept, it is imperative that a study be carried out to see how effective the Green Economy is. This is even more so important because UNEP is coming up with a revised version of the GE and calling it the All-Inclusive Green Economy. In it they aim to redefine the Green Economy as a three-dimensional approach to combat the environmental challenges with a social and economic perspective. This is also due to the fact that the 2030 Agenda⁶ is more or less agreed upon⁷ and will thus shift the international community into the Sustainable Development Goals as opposed to its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals. Not much has been written on the subject of the Green Economy especially in the Environmental Diplomacy angle. This project will thus add on to the academic gap of correlating the GE with environmental diplomacy efforts. On the policy front, this proposal can serve as lessons learned in which future policy makers could tweak the GE in order to make it more

⁶ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

⁷ General Assembly hands over draft global sustainability agenda to UN Member States.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=51767#.VgJfsJ2qqko>

relevant and all-inclusive not only in terms of the socio-economic factor but also considering that the world is also full of indigenous solutions that could be used in the modern world.

1.4 Literature review

1.4.1. INTRODUCTION

The inaugural meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly⁸ (UNEA) in 2014 was a historic event that had culminated for more than four decades of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) work in the environmental field. UNEA came about from the 2012 Rio +20 Earth Summit⁹ where the world leaders provided for the strengthening and upgrading the mandate of UNEP. This also led to UNEP having universal membership.¹⁰

The environment has not always been of concern to the international community. However, with the rapid changes in the environment especially from the industrialization of the economy, the world took notice of the importance of protecting and nurturing the environment. In 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was officially formed to help deal with the growing environmental challenges that were gaining notoriety.

One big factor that made the world pay attention to the environmental issues was that of acid rain. In the 1970s, Sweden and Canada¹¹ were especially vocal in the phenomena of acid rain. Scientific research had found that due to the massive industrial progress that was being made

⁸ (www.unep.org/unea)

⁹ (www.uncsd2012.org) The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) is being organized in pursuance of General Assembly Resolution 64/236 - See more at: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/about.html#sthash.qA3Civ75.dpuf>

¹⁰ Previously the Governing Council of UNEP elected only 58 members into the council. (<http://www.unep.org/newyork/Default.aspx?tabid=52273>)

¹¹ (<http://www.britannica.com/science/acid-rain>) Acid rain. Gene E. Likens

by the big time producers such as the United States of America (USA), the chemicals being released into the atmosphere was reacting with the water particles creating what was termed as acid rain. This was a wakeup call to the international community on how environmental issues are a transboundary and transnational issue.

According to John Caroll, transboundary environmental problems arise when all if not all the benefits of pollution emitting activity accrue to one nation while most of the costs accrue to the nation across the border¹².

The existence and location of the border causes an imbalance when these issues arise. This means that it is not necessarily the action but instead the impact of the activity in question. According to Caroll, perception equals reality in the context of politics and diplomacy. That said; if the people of a certain nation perceive that they are getting the short end of the stick, it will become an issue regardless.

This is where international environmental diplomacy comes in. The aim is to attempt to resolve these environmental challenges to the satisfaction of those concerned.

If we examine Europe's history, it is easy to see how transboundary issues have evolved. This may be explained by the fact that Europe in comparison to other continents is smaller and thus the proximity of many of the states to each other creates site-specific cases of these challenges. Also, Europe is where the industrial revolution took off on the mid-18th century. This is when the world discovered the use of coal in powering machines and transportation systems. As

¹² Caroll, J. E. (1990). *International Environmental Diplomacy: The Management and Resolution of Transfrontier Environmental Problems*. London: CUP Archive.

much as this made life easier for the people at the time, the effects of the coal were felt in the environment, which also affected the health of the people.

The environment is not an entity on its own but is linked with other factors that concern the world. One such example is the effect that the environment has on health impacts of a society. As Swedish diplomat Lars Bjorkböm¹³ aptly recognizes, the environment should be accepted in a more central role in international relations. This is because there is a big link especially with security as studies have shown the correlation between environmental degradation and the social, economic and political destabilization.

As stated above, the environment affects either directly or indirectly the socio-economic dimensions of a society. These two dimensions are themselves not divorced from politics. In the realist theory, scholars such as Hans J. Morgenthau argue that the state is like an extension of man who they describe as being brutal and egotistic. Thompson (1985) states “human nature has not changed since the days of classical antiquity” of which at the core is human ego.¹⁴ Machiavelli, another proponent of realism states that in politics “it must be taken for granted that all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers”.

Realism as opposed to idealism looks at the world in an objective and realistic way. Critics of the idealist theory have argued that it is a very utopian idea that is not true to the world as it stands now.

¹³ Caroll, J. E. (1990). *International Environmental Diplomacy: The Management and Resolution of Transfrontier Environmental Problems*. London: CUP Archive.

¹⁴ *The Logic of Positive Engagement*. Miroslav Nincic. Cornell University Press. (2011)

So what does realism mean for environmental diplomacy? The main argument is that the state acts not for the sake of the goodness of the international community but rather for their own state interests. The environment as much as it is a shared, source of natural resources that transcends borders; states do not engage in diplomacy with other states on the matter because of the sake of the world. They do this to protect what they consider to be their interests.

1.4.2. The Green Economy

Green Economy was first coined in 1989 by a group of environmental economists that were writing a report for the United Kingdom government.¹⁵ This report was titled “Blueprint for a Green Economy”¹⁶. In this report however, there was no clear definition of what this “green economy” really means. UNEP then revived it in 2008 as a response to the economic downturn in the world markets. The aim was to promote a package that would help countries recovery from the poor economy in a sustainable way. Later in October that year, UNEP launched the Green Economy Initiative¹⁷

In March 2010, the General Assembly¹⁸ of the United Nations agreed that the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication would form a theme of the Rio+20 Earth Summit. This brought the Green Economy concept to the international platform.

The Green Economy is still much a debated upon subject. The fact that there is no clear internationally agreed upon definition for it shows that it is still a new concept that not everyone is eager to take on. UNEP has however defined the green economy as “one that

¹⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1446>

¹⁶ Pearce, Markandya and Barbier, 1989

¹⁷ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1446>

¹⁸ Resolution 64/236

results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive”¹⁹

This concept is ideal in creating a sustainable world in which countries will be able to protect their resources for the coming generations as was envisioned in the Rio+20 sustainable development conference.

The Green Economy does not however give answer on how this will be done practically. It presumes that all countries will take it up in what can only be described as an idealist viewpoint. Many of the global environmental challenges can be pointed to the western world and their smoke emitting factories. It is unfortunate that the countries feeling the brunt of these ecological changes are those in the peripheral south. These countries are also at the bottom of the economic chain. One wonders how then these countries will adopt these green economic policies. Some of these countries have argued that the Green Economy is North centric and aims to suppress the economic growth of these developing countries.

This can be argued to be a blanket that is assumed to be a one size fits²⁰ all for the current state of affairs. Different countries have different ways in which they are trying to preserve their natural resources and so it is not ‘fair’ to impose a structure that is assumed to be the solution to a major problem. A question arises in that, how exactly are these countries expected to deal with a reform in their national strategies? Another question that needs to be answered is what

¹⁹ UNEP. (n.d.). *Green Economy*. Retrieved 2015, from <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>

²⁰ Khor, M. (2011). Risks and uses of the green economy concept In the context of sustainable development, Poverty and equity .

going green exactly means? This is an ambiguous statement that is not user friendly to those that really need it. The people that live in the villages of these developing countries would be those that would be most against this idea as they would be the ones to lose out the most.

Economically, it would also be very costly for these countries unlike those of the West that have already more or less stabilized their economies and can afford changing things up at will.

The Green Economy is looked upon as a beacon of hope in finding a way of balancing a green yet sustainable economy. This seems very idealistic and lacks in tackling a myriad of concerns. There can be a better way of solving the huge disparities in the global economy and addressing sustainability and environmental challenges without placing a 'one size fits all' idea to try and fix it.

1.5. Theoretical framework

This research is guided by the realist point of view in discussing the challenges that the green economy concept brings to environmental diplomacy. Realism is a theory that was propagated by famous scholars such as Machiavelli²¹, Hans J. Morgenthau²² and others. In their argument, they view the world as being very anarchic and full of ego-driven individuals. This is because people, according to them, are driven by their egos and their thirst for power. This means that the state is in essence looking out for its own interests. Even when it comes to diplomacy, states only interact based on the knowledge that they will gain something from the relationship with another state. This can either be a mutually benefiting gain, or one that is inclined to their favour.

²¹ Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli, an Italian diplomat during the Renaissance period.

²² Hans Joachim Morgenthau was one of the leading twentieth-century figures in the study of international politics

The economy in the modern world is dictated by the capitalist ideals. Scholars such as Karl Marx^{23 24} argued that the capitalist idea would eventually run its course as time went by. Many people thought that this would happen as the world went through the financial crisis of 2008²⁵, however, this was a passing blip in what is a fully engrained system of the world.

The Green Economy is a concept that promotes change in a national policy to be more “green” in that it promotes the sustainability of the economy in its aims of development. The Green Economy at first glance seems very idealist²⁶. It has the characteristics of the utopian ideal that the world, when faced with a challenge, comes together to find mutually benefiting solutions. However, in the realist perspective, the Green Economy is rather a one sided affair that propagates the whims of the more developed western world. It calls for the developing countries to slow their growth and adopt new policies that would enable them to be more “green” and thus promote sustainability of the economy.

The green economy is a project that is being shipped by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which calls for nations to be more proactive in protecting the environment as they seek to develop. Realism argues that there is no idea put forward in the global arena that does not serve the national interests of a particular state. Capitalist²⁷ ideals that dictate the modern economy have seeped into every crevice of the society. The Green Economy is neither a solution nor an alternative to the capitalist agenda but rather an extension of it. This paper

²³ German philosopher, economist, sociologist, journalist, and revolutionary socialist. Known as the father of Marxism that was against capitalism.

²⁴ BBC. (2011). A Point of View: The revolution of capitalism.

²⁵ Lehman Brothers, a sprawling global bank, in September 2008 almost brought down the world’s financial system. It caused a massive credit crunch that brought on one of the worst recessions in modern times.

²⁶ Edward Hallett Carr (1892-1982) attacked the idealist position, which he describes as “utopianism.”

²⁷ Karl Marx saw capitalism as a mode of production based on private ownership of the means of production.

aims to examine how the green economy if not altered, is an impediment rather than a solution in fixing the world's environmental challenges.

1.6. Hypotheses

The following are hypotheses stemming from the research:

1. The political economy is crucial in influencing environmental diplomacy.
2. The green economy is a huge challenge in environmental diplomacy.
3. The Green Economy raises more questions than answers.

1.7. Methodology

The study design used was based on already available material on the topic of green economy as well as environmental diplomacy. The study site was the library by referencing publications such as books, journals, papers as well as internet sources. This research employed data collection methods that involved collecting data from reading published books and journals from varying sources including internet journals and papers. As this is a qualitative research, there is a possibility that the information gathered may be subjective to the author. This will look at various sources and try to be as objective as possible in inferring results of this research. The term Green Economy will refer to efforts by governments whether directly or indirectly implementing policies that promote economic growth through sustainable development opportunities. The research looked at publications from 1989, when the term green economy was first coined to the present. Some limitations of this research included the fact that before 1989, such like policies existed but may not have been described green economy. And so it would be up to interpretation and understanding of the events that took place at the time as

well as the issues that were prominent in the international community. Another limitation was that there was lack of comprehensive data from the early years of this concept as the environment and issues surrounding the environment did not hold as much clout as it does in this day and age.

1.8. Chapter outline of the research project

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic. Chapter 2 examines the concept of GE and how it promotes the new way of doing business. Chapter 3 discusses the role of the GE in environmental diplomacy. Chapter 4 analyzes the challenges of the GE in promoting environmental diplomacy. Chapter 5 offers a conclusion on the topic.

CHAPTER 2

THE CONCEPT OF GREEN ECONOMY AND HOW IT PROMOTES A NEW WAY OF DOING BUSINESS

2.1. Introduction

The Green Economy is a relatively new concept to many in the international community. From the western part of the globe in the United States of America to the eastern shores of China, the world is embracing what many are calling the green economy. This is supposed to help countries not only protect the environment by opting for more sustainable way of using natural resources and protecting the environment from degradation but also help create jobs for many.

A lot of money is being pumped into projects that promote the environmental agenda. The United States of America has already promised to spend around USD 150 billion²⁸ over the next ten years. The then British Prime Minister at the time, Gordon Brown had called on the international community to come up with a “Green New Deal” that would create a “low-carbon recovery” of the economy.²⁹ These actions tell us a few things but more importantly illustrate that the economy more than anything else is most important. Diplomacy in itself is a way by which states interact with each other in a peaceful manner. This is not to say that there cannot be antagonized relations among states. The truth of the matter is that diplomacy is concerned with the promotion of peace not only for the sake of people but more so for the sake of the economy.

²⁸ http://change.gov/agenda/energy_and_environment_agenda/

²⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/4946259/400000-new-green-jobs-in-next-eight-years-says-Gordon-Brown.html>

A peaceful world creates a conducive environment for better economic relationships. It is a proven fact that when a war breaks out the balance in economic strength of the states involved tilts. Those that are already better off in terms of manpower as well as financially most of the time tend to gain more. This really depends of the outcome of the war. This can be illustrated with the World War I and II.

During World War I, most of the countries assumed that it would be a short war. However, the war lasted for four years that is from 1914 to 1918. The outcome of this war was an advantage to the allies who had a more versatile economy and better access to financial reserves. Unfortunately for countries such as Germany, who ended up losing, were forced to pay reparation of 19 billion German gold marks³⁰, which they paid out between 1919 and 1932.³¹

Most of this money that Germany paid out was loans that they received from American banks. The reparations were in turn used to pay off loans they had from the United States Treasury. This was to restore order especially to the civilian economy.³²

Total war demands total mobilization of a nation's resources for the common goal. War is a very expensive endeavor. Before a nation goes to war, the most common action is that the ruling government will table it in their congress or parliament so as to get the buy in from majority if not all the leaders present. In areas where war or civil unrest is persistent, the economies are either doing very poorly or are almost non-existent. In the case of Somalia that has been at war with itself for over a decade, there is hardly any economic interaction with the international community.

³⁰ German currency pre-euro era

³¹ Zara S. Steiner, *The lights that failed: European international history 1919–1933* (2005)

³² Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (1998)

The economy is crucial for the survival of a state. If a state's economy is thriving, chances are majority of the people can afford to have a good standard of living. Many are hailing the Green Initiatives³³ as new ways of promoting economic growth especially through the creation of jobs. In an economy that is overly saturated with white-collar jobs there is also need for the non-technically skilled workers. Unfortunately, most of these non-technical jobs are not high paying and neither are they very "green". Many workers are expected to work in dangerous work conditions and are at most times not well equipped nor protected for the jobs they do. This is because these jobs include the likes of mining need people to work long hours in dangerous conditions and usually on low wages.

2.2. Green Economy: New way of doing business

The Green Economy does have its pros and cons but it is a refreshing concept in a world that has started thinking more about the long-term future rather than the immediate. Many have been calling for the world to be more accountable to the environment for the sake of the future generations. In the Rio+20 conference³⁴ held in 2012, the world came together and called on the world to promote sustainable development.

Studies have predicted that by 2030, 60%³⁵ of the population will be living in cities³⁶. This means that there will be a need for more production of goods to service the expected growth of demand. The current situation in the world is that due to demand and the growth of

³³ The Green Initiative has as its main objective the offsetting of Greenhouse gases emitted by human activities that can range from complex industrial production processes to simply driving a car, with reforestation projects in riparian areas that need to be recovered.

³⁴ www.uncsd2012.org/

³⁵ <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3d8f9acc-02cb-11d9-a968-00000e2511c8.html>

³⁶ http://www.who.int/gho/urban_health/situation_trends/urban_population_growth_text/en/

consumerism, the rate at which minerals and other raw materials needed, is running out very fast.

The green economy thereby provides a radical break from the norm. Rather than using products and disposing of them, this concept provides for the sustainable use of materials. Another reason as to why the green economy is different from the usual run of the mill international economy is that it aims to address the three main challenges of society. These challenges are the economic, environmental and social aspects of the society. These three-dimensional outlook to the way the world needs to address its challenges is something that has been welcomed by many countries that are tired of seeing the world fall into the way side of disaster.

This three-dimensional outlook can help governments to fully cater to their people and the needs of their countries. If you take the example of a country such as Brazil a green economy can be quite beneficial for their economy. The Brazilian Amazon forest is known for its vast and seemingly endless supply of trees and numerous hidden treasures. The whole forest still has not been fully explored and some indigenous tribes still live within it. This forest has its own ecosystem and by extension influences the ecosystem³⁷ in Brazil. Due to the vastness of this forest, some illegal loggers have taken advantage of this and are illegally logging trees³⁸ and selling in the black market. These loggers do not replenish the trees that they cut down; which have been there for even hundreds of years. This Amazon³⁹ forest is famous, with tourists

³⁷ National Geographic Society. <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/habitats/rainforest-threats/>

³⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-33449788>

³⁹ <http://www.brazil.org.za/amazon-rainforest.html>

flocking the country in order to enjoy this marvel. If the Brazilian government is not careful, there will soon be no tourist attraction to visit. Despite the economic growth that is taking place with the fast rate at which the forest is disappearing⁴⁰ it will eventually affect its economic growth, which in turn will affect the social development of its population. And also, the forest disappearing will have adverse effects on the climate of Brazil and the rest of the world as well. This shows the interconnection that the environment, the economy and the society have.

The environment is crucial to the survival of the whole world. In essence, any environmental disaster that occurs in one part of the world can change the whole makeup of the world. Edward Lorenz⁴¹ put it well when he mentioned the butterfly effect when explaining the chaos theory. In his theory, he states that even the smallest action by a butterfly could cause a hurricane in some part of the world. This theory aptly explains how the environment is interconnected in any part of the world. It is also what I would consider the most important as this is something that there is no one owner. There is a shared responsibility when it comes to the environment.

Even though borders on the maps separate the world, what even the astronauts in space see is that there is no physical line on the earth that defines these boundaries. Animals too move from country to country without concern for these boundaries. A forest does not only grow in one country and stop itself from spreading to the neighbouring country because of the boundaries. Lake Victoria⁴² is a perfect example of a natural resource that is found in three countries namely Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. These three countries have to establish laws on

⁴⁰ <http://www.economist.com/node/3996152>

⁴¹ Edward Lorenz, father of chaos theory and butterfly effect. (<http://news.mit.edu/2008/obit-lorenz-0416>)

⁴² The lake was named after Queen Victoria by the explorer John Hanning Speke, the first Briton to document it.

how to share the resources found in this lake. All three have everything to lose if this resource is not taken care of and sustained for the future.

2.3. Is the Green Economy Effective?

The green economy is the best option thus far in taking care to protect resources for the future by using them in a way that can be sustainable. Studies⁴³ have shown that the consumer sector can save up to USD 700 billion annually by promoting a more sustainable-oriented economy rather than the usual buy and replace type of consumerism that exists. As the raw materials diminish and consumerism continues to grow, there will be a definite increase in the price of costs.

The green economy is a new idea that has come about as a way to try and find a solution to the world problems. This could create a historic change in the world that would be able to create a way of helping the world solve its social inequalities, economic inconsistencies and one-sided developmental opportunities. In the current setup of the world, the West⁴⁴ is known for manufacturing and industrialization while the South⁴⁵ is more focused on the extraction of the raw materials needed for the manufactures' in the West.

Green economy would promote the growth of green industries that would help cut down the carbon emissions⁴⁶ in the world by a huge percentage. In the past decades, economists solved

⁴³ Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with McKinsey

⁴⁴ Refers to countries that would be described as being developed. These include countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom and a majority of other European countries.

⁴⁵ Refers to countries that are less and/or least developed. These are countries mostly in Africa, South America and South Asia.

⁴⁶ Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is the primary greenhouse gas emitted through human activities. In 2013, CO₂ accounted for about 82% of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions from human activities. (<http://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/co2.html>)

the economic problems, the environmentalists and scientists would be expected to deal with the environmental issues and academicians would criticize these proposals. With the green economy, all these professionals have been brought together to work towards a common goal that looks at the best interest of all parties involved. This is because it has been understood that all parts are mutually inclusive and need each other to survive. Entrepreneurs have also been major players in coming up with new ideas for developing ways of promoting and using these new green ideas.

The conventional industries are inefficient in their energy consumption, and wasteful. The green industries create an opportunity for sustainable development. These green industries provide numerous opportunities such as creating stability and resilience for the environment⁴⁷ as well as the economy. It can also bring about job and income security for the many people in need of it. Human wellbeing is extremely important because without it, people are unable to work, and this can affect the economy of a state. Another important aspect is that can be catered for through these green industries is that of energy. Energy is very important to the growth of a country's economy. If the sources of energy such as coal and petroleum oil run out, the world will face a crisis in which dependency on these finite sources of energy would result in chaos.

The green economy provides a way by which these would become non-issues as it would create a way by which renewable and sustainable energy⁴⁸ would be constantly available.

⁴⁷ Blueprint for a Green Economy. David William Pearce, Anil Markandya, Edward Barbier. (1989)

⁴⁸ Renewable Energy. Investing in Energy and Resource Efficiency.
(http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/Portals/88/documents/ger/GER_6_RenewableEnergy.pdf)

In a study done by the World Bank, they examined India and how the solar panel market influenced the economy. They found that the solar panel market potentially exceeds USD 60 billion⁴⁹ in the next decade. However when compared to China, its global market share dropped from four percent to two percent while China's was the reverse. It grew from two percent to four. This is because China has offered cheap financing which reduced equity requirements and gave firms the freedom to operate with lower returns. This illustrates that there needs to be backing from the respective governments for this new idea to take off. Without government support it would be difficult for the green economy agenda to come to fruition. This is because the government plays a key role in the encouraging potential investors to actively invest in these new ideas especially those that involve going green.

Unlike other economic concepts where the profits or gains are realised relatively quickly and are obvious in nature, those that are based on sustainability are not so. This is because when it comes to the environment, change takes time and is therefore not immediately obvious. The gains from the green economy are based on looking at the long-term results rather than the immediate future. For some entrepreneurs and governments, this is not an appetizing idea. Despite this many are hailing this a wind of change by which the whole world can mutually benefit from efforts by respective governments around the world to change the future for the better.

⁴⁹ Unleashing the Potential of Renewable Energy in India. World Bank.
(http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTENERGY2/Resources/Unleashing_potential_of_renewables_in_India.pdf)

The Green Economy Pocketbook's⁵⁰ case for action describes the green economy and what it aim to achieve as it “being a different way of doing things” and aslo about “recognising that our economies need to be guided by different goals, they need to be sustained by different activities and they need to deliver different results.”

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<http://www.greeneconomycoalition.org/sites/greeneconomycoalition.org/files/Green%20Economy%20Pocketbook%3B%20the%20case%20for%20action.pdf>

CHAPTER 3
GREEN ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY

3.1. Introduction

The Green Economy was first coined by a group of environmental economists in 1989 that were writing a report for the United Kingdom government.⁵¹ This report was titled “Blueprint for a Green Economy”⁵². In this report however, there was no clear definition of what this “green economy” really means. In 2008, UNEP revived this concept as a response to the economic downturn in the world markets. The aim was to promote a package that would help countries recover from the poor economy in a sustainable way. Later in October that year, UNEP launched the Green Economy Initiative⁵³

Sustainability has been the running theme in the promotion of the Green Economy. Many are worried that the rate at which human beings are using the quickly reducing resources will bring about a time where none of these resources will exist. Sustainability has thus become key in trying to prevent the world from depleting the badly needed resources.

What then is sustainability? This word is derived from the verb to sustain. This is described according to the Cambridge dictionary as “allowing something to continue for a period of time⁵⁴”. It is also defined as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”.⁵⁵ In the time we use up all the resources we will have nothing else to survive on. The environment is key in the survival of

⁵¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1446>

⁵² Pearce, Markandya and Barbier, 1989

⁵³ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1446>

⁵⁴ Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary

⁵⁵ WCED, 1987

human beings. Not only do human beings need the resources in order to run and maintain their industries but we also need the environment for the most basic of things such as food from the farms, the air we breathe is important because we need clean air to survive. The state of the environment has long been a contentious issue with some people claiming that climate change is not real. There is irrefutable evidence from around the world that indicate that climate change is indeed a reality and we have to take steps to reduce the impact it is having on the world. Some of these events include the severe droughts that are being experienced by some parts of the world that did not have such extreme weather patterns before. This is especially in California in the United States. In Africa, there has been an increase in the rate of desertification due to the lack of rain as well as the drastic change of the weather patterns.

According to the National Air Space Association (NASA) in their article titled “Climate change: How do we know?”⁵⁶, they state that ninety-seven percent of climate scientists agree that climate-warming trends over the past century are likely due to human activities. This would not be that great of a challenge because over the millions of years that the earth has existed, there have been various earth defying changes such as the ice age period. What is alarming is the rate at which the climate of the world is changing and this is because of human activity.

The truth of the matter is that we, as human beings, have over the last decades managed to single handedly destroy the environment and as a result impacted the climate and the changes we are facing today.

⁵⁶ www.climate.nasa.gov/evidence/ (Global Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet, 2009)

3.2. Industry and its effects on the environment

Ever since the industrial revolution of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries in Europe and America, the world has never been the same. We went through the agrarian rural societies to the industrial and now mostly urban societies exist. The industrial revolution is said to have begun with the invention of the wheel. It is due to this that the modern economic growth effectively began. According to P.M. Deane⁵⁷, there are some changes that occurred during this era; 1) the widespread and systematic application of modern science and empirical knowledge on production; 2) specialization of economic activities which were aimed at national and international markets; 3) urbanization; 4) enlargement and depersonalization of products; 5) production of manufactured goods and services; 6) intensive and extensive use of capital resources as a substitute for and complement to human effort; 7) emergence of new social and occupational classes determined by ownership of or relationship to the means of production other than land, namely capital.

This in essence changed the whole world and how it would interact with each other thereafter. This revolution created the need for the bourgeois⁵⁸ to require labourers who came from the lower class of people who would be referred to as the proletariat⁵⁹. These labourers would work in the fields as well as the industries that were driven by natural resources. At the time, coal was a precious commodity as it was used to power the machines that were not advanced

⁵⁷ "P.M Deane "The First Industrial Revolution"

⁵⁸ In Marxist philosophy the bourgeoisie is the social class who owns the means of production and whose societal concerns are the value of property and the preservation of capital, to ensure the perpetuation of their economic supremacy in society

⁵⁹ A term used to describe the class of wage-earners (especially industrial workers), in a capitalist society, whose only possession of significant material value is their labour-power (their ability to work)

as those in the last century. Coal⁶⁰ has reserves that can be found in almost any country in the world, as it is fossilized remains of plants and animals over the years. With the industrial revolution taking place in mostly Europe, competition grew and thus began the modern economic trade system we have now.

The economic competition in Europe led the countries to search for more minerals and raw materials outside their own territories which effectively brought about the colonization of Africa, South America and some South Asian countries. In the case of Africa, these European nations sat together in Congo in what is now referred to the "Scramble for Africa"⁶¹. It took about a decade (1881-1914) for the Europeans to invade, occupy and colonize African territory.

That being said, industries in Europe were still growing and scientific discoveries were being made in areas such as medicine, mechanics and machinery. If anything, the discovery and acquisition of African territories gave scientists a push to improve on their inventions as this would always but that nation one step better than the others. Capital was important, as it still is today, when doing research in these fields. Industrial growth perpetuated the economy, which in turn provided much needed capital to fund the constantly changing research on industrial development.

These models of industry, while at the time were good as they promoted higher standards of living albeit for some, they have also caused massive damage to the environment. A few years

⁶⁰ This term has meant "mineral of fossilized carbon" since the 13th century and is a combustible black or brownish-black sedimentary rock usually occurring in rock strata in layers or veins called coal beds or coal seams.

⁶¹ This was the invasion, occupation, colonization and annexation of African territory by European powers during the period of New Imperialism, between 1881 and 1914

ago, scientists argued that the pollution caused by the big factories especially from the developed countries, had caused a hole in the ozone layer.⁶² The ozone layer is being affected by the pollutants that are being released onto the atmosphere by companies that are mass-producing goods that are needed in the economic development of especially the developed countries.

The reason why the depletion of the ozone layer is a major issue is because scientists have found a correlation between the intensity of the rays of the sun and global warming as well as the health issues such as skin diseases like cancer. This is one of the few reasons that the world is paying more attention to what is happening the environment. The state of the environment is affecting how business is being done. In the last ten years with the increased technological advances especially in the area of communication, more and more people are becoming aware of what is happening globally. Also, we have some people who have access to confidential governmental information who are releasing⁶³ this and many others to the world. As this information becomes public, the world becomes more informed on the good and bad aspects of decisions made by not only those in political offices but by CEOs of the many international companies around the world.

⁶² The ozone layer or ozone shield refers to a region of Earth's stratosphere that absorbs most of the Sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation. It contains high concentrations of ozone (O₃) relative to other parts of the atmosphere, although still very small relative to other gases in the stratosphere.

⁶³ Julian Assagne and his collaborators founded the Wikileaks website in which secret information is published. They came into notoriety around 2011 when they leaked diplomatic cables of the US State Department. Another notorious information leaker is Edward Snowden who is an American computer professional, former CIA employee, and former government contractor who leaked classified information from the U.S. National Security Agency in 2013.

3.3. The environment, a shared resource

In the past few years, many have taken the activist role in protecting the environment. Notable people include Al Gore⁶⁴ and Wangari Maathai⁶⁵ but to name a few. They have realized that the environment is a way to protect the future from the likelihood of irreversible disasters. This protection of the environment is not only being carried out by these selfless activists but also by the politicians and more so through the diplomats.

The environment is a shared resource. What happens to the forests in the Congo will have an effect on the rivers in Asia. This as explained earlier is the conflict theory or what is also known as the butterfly effect. In the late 1970s, the world united and saw that there was a need to factor in the environment into their discussions. This is how the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) came into being. It provides a platform in which the world leaders can discuss issues of environmental importance and make collaborative efforts and policies on how best to protect and preserve this very important resource.

Discussions can range from the tactics that African countries can use to deter illegal wildlife and trade or how to protect the ecosystems of the South American rainforests or even debates on which laws should be written to advance environmental protection throughout the world. All these efforts by these diplomats, politicians and individual activists is, what is referred to environmental diplomacy.

⁶⁴ 45th Vice President of the United States of America who started a campaign to educate citizens about global warming.

⁶⁵ 2004 first African woman Nobel Peace Prize recipient and Kenyan environmental and political activist who founded the Green Belt Movement in the 1970s.

Diplomacy has been around since the beginning of human kind. However, most would associate it with only the political and economic aspect of it. Diplomacy is defined as the art of negotiation.⁶⁶ The goal of diplomacy according to Calvet de Magalhães is to try to solve by nonviolent means all the problems that may arise between two or more states. It should be noted that these problems range from a myriad of things. The most common is trade, but the environment is becoming more and more of an important factor in how states relate with each other. The environment as mentioned earlier can impact the productivity of a nation. Without adequate resources, countries are forced to seek them from elsewhere. If these providers are not careful, chances are their own reserves of these resources will soon be exhausted due to high demands. Because of this, many countries are starting to rethink and re-evaluate their environmental policies. They are also looking for new ways of conducting business for the future. One of the ideas that have been floated around is that of the Green Economy.

In March 2010, the General Assembly⁶⁷ of the United Nations agreed that the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication would form a theme of the Rio+20 Earth Summit. This brought the Green Economy concept to the international platform.

UNEP has defined the green economy as “one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ José Calvet de Magalhães. *The Pure Concept of Diplomacy*

⁶⁷ UNGA Resolution 64/236

⁶⁸ UNEP. (n.d.). *Green Economy*. Retrieved 2015, from <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>

As more and more governments come to accept that climate change is real, there has been a need to change the economy and how we relate to the environment. Due to the advent of industrialization, many greenhouse gases have been let out into the atmosphere, which has caused there to be a significant rise in the temperature of the world. This increase in the world's temperature has resulted in change of climatic patterns as well as imbalance in the world's ecosystem. Africa is said to be at the highest risk of suffering from the impacts of climate change⁶⁹. This is mostly due to the considerable limited adaptive capacity, poverty and the existing low levels of development.

3.4. Going Green

Many countries and companies are using the slogan "Going Green" to refer to their efforts in finding alternatives in doing business that would create sustainability and would be more environmentally friendly.

In 2012, U.S. President Obama in his State of the Union⁷⁰ address pledged that America would get behind innovation of clean energy. He committed USD 15 billion annually for the next ten years. This funding would go into research and development of renewable energies. The USA is not alone in this endeavor; China⁷¹ has also over the past few years allocated a big portion of its budget to investing in clean energy. What many scholars especially of economics have realized

⁶⁹ Climate change in Africa - What is at stake? Excerpts from IPCC reports, the convention, & bap compiled by AMCEN secretariat.

⁷⁰ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/01/25/2012-state-union-address-enhanced-version>
This is an annual speech delivered by the President of the United States to a joint session of the United States Congress.

⁷¹ <http://www.wallstreetdaily.com/2015/02/27/china-renewable-energy-growth/>

is that innovation not only increases competitiveness in the markets but also drives down the prices.

Juan Verde in his presentation during the TED⁷²xCIBELES⁷³ noted that solar panel prices had reduced by 75 percent since the 1970s compared to the prices in 2012. He noted that it further reduced by 45 percent since 2012. Similar trends were realized with LED⁷⁴ screens. About 30 years ago, these would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars compared to the tens of dollars that it costs now.

The green innovations are helping create green energy, which create profitable industries. As more competition arises in the area of green technology, more can be done for the protection and preservation of the environment.

The Green sector can provide a lot of opportunities in the areas of energy, construction and renovation as well as providing for ecological consumer products. In a survey conducted by a United Kingdom organization, they found that more than 90 percent of people think that climate change directly impacts their lives. They also discovered that the 90 percent of people would rather buy products that were environmentally friendly. This combined with a massive social demand for environmental accountability is making the green sector a very lucrative

⁷² TED is a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas, usually in the form of short, powerful talks (18 minutes or less). TED began in 1984 as a conference where Technology, Entertainment and Design converged, and today covers almost all topics — from science to business to global issues — in more than 100 languages. Meanwhile, independently run TEDx events help share ideas in communities around the world. (<https://www.ted.com/about/our-organization>)

⁷³ (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-7ZBairDh4>)

⁷⁴ An LED display is a flat panel display, which uses an array of light-emitting diodes as pixels for a video display.

market both in terms of money as well as socially. As mentioned before, the environment is a driving force of many economies.

The Green Economy not only considers the environment and the economy as the only major factors of growth. It also encompasses the society, as they are the key in ensuring that the environment is protected while at the same time gain economically from these efforts. The outcome document aptly named “The future we want” ⁷⁵from the Rio+20 conference recognized the Green Economy as an important tool for achieving sustainable development. It states that the Green Economy “should contribute to eradicating poverty as well as sustained economic growth, enhancing social inclusion, improving human welfare and creating opportunities for employment and decent work for all, while maintaining the healthy functioning of the earth’s ecosystems”.

Sustainable environment⁷⁶ tries to solve the socio-political crisis, economic crisis and ecological crisis. What has been realized is that the environment is the key to this as it can be harnessed to solve all these problems. In essence it can be used to solve the other crises. The green economy can help in restoring growth and limit climate change.

This is what many governments are now seeking out. The more developed countries in the North are by virtue of the onset of the industrial revolution more advanced in terms of technology and machinery as compared to the developing and more so the least developed countries of the global South. However, because of this, there has been some animosity

⁷⁵ Rio+20 outcome document.

http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/rio20_outcome_document_complete.pdf

⁷⁶ Pearce, Barbier, Markandya. “Sustainable Development: Economics and Environment in the Third World”

between these the developed and the developing countries due to the sole reason that the main culprit of pollution through carbon emissions and waste dumping are the North. It is therefore perplexing to the South when they are told that they must conform to a certain way to developing as Carbon emissions are destroying⁷⁷ the planet's climate. To many, this seems unfair and at times the North has been accused of new neo-imperialistic tendencies to halt the development of these developing nations.

That is why environmental diplomacy is important. Members of the United Nations voted on increasing the power of the United Nations Environment Programme at the Rio+20 to be “the leading global environmental authority⁷⁸ that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.” This created the United Nations Environment Assembly that provided universal membership to all UN Members to UNEP's new governing council. It is in this forum that many of the environmental policies that affect the world are debated upon.

As the leading authority of the environment, UNEP strives to tackle the environmental challenges that face the world today. This does not mean however, that it is alone in the quest for sustainable environmental balance and socio-economic growth for all. This is done with partners in form of governments, other inter-governmental organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

⁷⁷ WWF. Effects of Climate Change. <http://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/effects-of-climate-change>

⁷⁸United Nations Resolution 67/213

3.5. Countries' unique challenges and their effect on environmental diplomacy

The green economy is a highly ambitious but very manageable concept that can promote talks among the various nations. Due to the artificial borders drawn up during the various conquests, crusades, and colonization, many of the problems that some nations may face may not necessarily be understood by those that may not have same ecological flora and fauna but the UNEP platform gives a chance to these countries to be heard as an environmental problem is essentially a shared problem.

For example, the African countries have wildlife that is unique to only that part of the world. Right now many of these African countries are facing a huge problem of illegal trade⁷⁹ in wildlife. They are also facing challenges with poachers killing elephants and rhinos for their horns. In the last few years, the rhino population in Africa has decreased significantly. In Kenya, there is a white male rhino that is being guarded⁸⁰ twenty-four hours a day because it is the last of its kind in the world.

Other countries such as Netherlands might not understand this problem, as they do not have such wildlife however; the environment is a mutually owned resource. Each and every individual is responsible and has a stake in the environment. Anything that happens in one part of the world can affect another. This problem⁸¹ of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife decreased⁸² the number of tourists that visit African countries during their vacations. This is

⁷⁹ UNEP. <http://www.unep.org/unea/wildlife.asp>

⁸⁰ <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/16/africa/kenya-northern-white-rhino/> (Karimi, 2015)

⁸¹The Devastating Effects of Poaching. <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/the-devastating-effects-of-wildlife-poaching/>

⁸² Poaching will hit tourism industry hard. <http://www.wildaid.org/news/tanzania-poaching-threatens-tourism-economy-growth>

because the less the animals are, the less the interest of foreigners to see the African plains. This dwindling of tourists, results in poor earnings for the country affected as most of these countries depend on tourism as their main economic activity.

This also has an impact on the airlines that are owned by countries of the targeted tourists. With no animals to see, there is less of a need for the people to use the airlines for long haul flights. That means that the aviation industry in the country can be severely affected thus in turn affecting their economy and position in the world's market. Tourism is also a means by which people exchange ideas and learn about other cultures. This to some extent promotes peace and also investment. When people understand and have mutual respect for each other, they are unlikely to go to war. This is what diplomacy aims to do. Gone are the days when diplomatic relations were dependent solely on the diplomats sent to make the sending nation look good. Now diplomacy has expanded to include businessmen, investors, tourists, and students but to name a few.

The Green Economy offers a great chance for environmental diplomatic relations. By focusing on the environment, it is possible to find solutions to the social, economic and developmental challenges faced by the world today. All these dimensions are mutually inclusive and therefore there is need for a balance for all to work in sustaining each other.

The example given previously on the effects the environment has on tourism clearly illustrates how the economy is affected. To use the same example, the social dimension of the nationals living in that country will also be affected. As tourism is a major part of the economy that means that most of the people are employed by the camps or hotels or even as veterinarians to

cater for the animals. If the tourism fails, the jobs become scarce and the standards of living for the people drop or become worse.

Essentially what the green economy aims to do is to not only create environmental awareness but to also deliver poverty reductions, well-being, livelihoods, social protection and access to essential services. It also aims on improving governance and the rule of law by also making the producers and consumers accountable for the state of the environment. In the Rio+20 Outcome document, article 56⁸³ states that the “...green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication...” would be considered as one of the important tools of achieving sustainable development. It also states that it would enhance the ability of nations to manage natural resources sustainably and with lower negative environmental impacts, increase resource efficiency and reduce waste.

Diplomatic relations exist for not only preserving peace among those involved but in the realist sense, it exists for self-preservation. This self-preservation is driven through economic dominance of state. The Green Economy helps states to preserve themselves but with the idea that as they promote environmental sustainability they are essentially sustaining themselves as well.

The green economy is an alternative vision for growth and development. As of now, the current economic model emphasizes on raising the GDP of respective countries. According to Bapna and Talberth of the World Research Institute⁸⁴, the rate at which the gap between the poor and the rich increased and rose in more than two thirds of countries. They state “the persistence of

⁸³ The Future we want- Rio+20 A/RES/66/288

⁸⁴ <http://www.wri.org/blog/2011/04/qa-what-green-economy-0>

poverty and degradation of the environment can be traced to a series of market and institutional failures that make the prevailing economic model far less effective than it otherwise would be in advancing sustainable development goals. These market and institutional failures are well known to economists, but little progress has been made to address them". A market economy cannot be relied on to be the sole provider of public goods such as efficient electricity, sanitation and public transportation. The Green Economy this aims to change this through institutional reforms and regulatory tax and expenditure-based economic policies and tools.

The world through the Rio+20⁸⁵ acknowledged that the world is almost at a crisis point. We are reaching our planetary limits in our use of the natural resources that was once in abundance. This is not solely because of the industries and the like but is also because as the state of living improved for many and much advancement were made in medicine, technology and transport and communication, the world population has grown and is continuing to grow exponentially. This means more resources are needed to cater for this constantly growing population. We are using up more resources than can be regenerated by the earth.

Diplomacy is thus crucial when governments as well as companies and investors when discussing the way forward. The Green Economy⁸⁶ has been hailed as the solution to the growing environmental crisis. Many will appreciate that the Green Economy does not advocate neither does it favour one side of the three dimensions mentioned. All three, that is the

⁸⁵ Rio+20 Outcome document

⁸⁶ Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/greeneconomy>

environment, economy and social dimensions, are all important. It does not lay any blame nor does it expect more to be done by one or a specific group of states. Everyone is responsible for the state of the world, as each has had a role whether directly or indirectly in the depletion of the natural resources. The key to the Green Economy is that the environment can be a key instrument in solving the issues brought about by its misuse.

The Green Economy is therefore a great conversation starter for diplomats when it comes to environmental diplomacy. This is because it aspires to be a solution to solving one of the most challenging problems the world has seen in decades. It may not yet be perfect but at least it is a start to a conversation that the world has kept long overdue.

CHAPTER 4

CHALLENGES OF GREEN ECONOMY IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY

4.1. Introduction

Environmental diplomacy is unique in that as much as respective actors would like to push their own agendas; the environment is very much a shared resource. When the actors come together, they aim to in a sense protect that which belongs to the entire world. This is mostly due to the reality that if one fails, all fail.

The responsibility of environmental protection and sustainability falls in the hands of governments, NGOs and the more so the individuals. Without the environment, humankind loses. Not only does it tie into our economy but also in our society. For many environmentalists, the Green Economy is a compromise for a much needed and long overdue solution to the capitalist economy that has been majorly responsible for the destruction of the environment. This is in no way stating that the Green Economy will replace capitalism but is instead a “cleaner” and more environmentally aware way of doing business.

4.2. Realist viewpoint

Every country in the world is in the Realists sense, “looking out for themselves”. Thomas Hobbes⁸⁷ in his book “Leviathan” stated that “perpetual and restless desire for power” was a lifelong and fundamental quality shared by all humans.⁸⁸ Hobbes states that even though men differ in relative strength, they are equal in their ability to harm others using various means. In the period before civilization, Hobbes reflected that if two people desire the same thing it is

⁸⁷ Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was a scholar and realist

⁸⁸ Leviathan, Part 1: “Of Man”, Chapter 10-16

quite possible that it can result in war. He further stated that during this period, which was anarchical in nature, was thus “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short.” In his explanation on the law of nature, he elucidates that “all men have a natural right to all things” and that when we choose to make a contract for the sake of peace, we are obliged to follow through with it. From Hobbes, it can be deduced that man does not come together for the sake of “mutual love” but rather it is the mutual fear of destruction and failure that makes man work with others. The Hobbesian concern is that of human interaction with each other, which can be interpreted as how states interact with each other.

Another such scholar who could be referred to as the father of Realist thinking Niccolò Machiavelli⁸⁹ in his book “The Prince⁹⁰” stated that he would be looking at “the effectual truth of the matter rather than the imagined one.” For many realist scholars, the school of Idealism has been described as a utopia, which is far removed from what reality is. For Machiavelli, the idea that morals would push agenda is ludacris. He concludes that all means whether moral or immoral are justified means to an end. This is to mean that no state goes into any agreement solely for the sake of doing it. There is always a catch and this is what is referred to as state interest.

The founder of the neo-realist theory was a scholar by the name Kenneth Waltz⁹¹, who borrowed a leaf from Hobbes outlook of the world. He saw that the international community is

⁸⁹ Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) challenged the school of idealism. He was an Italian political theorist, historian, diplomat, humanist and writer.

⁹⁰ This is a famous and most quoted political treatise published in the 16th century (1532).

⁹¹ Most prominent theorist of international relations and author of books such as “Man, the State and War” (1959), “Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics” (1967) and “Theory of International Politics” (1979).

anarchic⁹². This, he explains, is due to the fact that each state is sovereign in its own right and thus does not answer to any other state. This simply means that when states make agreements or treaties with other states it is because they choose to do so themselves. There is no other higher sovereign power that can directly force any state to do anything against their will.

In a realist sense, states would rather get ahead by themselves but will compromise and work with others for a mutually benefiting goal. In many states now, it is therefore the job of diplomats, as representatives of the state, to speak on its behalf and work out deals that put them on the upper hand.

4.3. Historical influence on diplomatic relations among states

As with any new concept, there are areas of opportunity as well as those that present challenges. The Green Economy, while a fascinating and very long-term centered idea, presents challenges that may hinder the overall goal of this concept. Before dwelling on what challenges the Green Economy faces or may face in its implementation phase, it is important to perhaps understand a bit about the politics of the world after the Cold War. This is because; this period became the defying factor for what is now the political as well as economic system as we know it.

The Cold War was plagued with anxiety as the two super powers at the time were at the brink of a war. This would not be like the previous World Wars. Despite the fact that the American used atomic bombs⁹³ in World War II against Japan, this would be the first time that two countries would want to use atomic weapons in the war for world domination. The United

⁹² (Korab-Karpowicz, 2013)

⁹³ (Miscamble, 2011)

States wanted to propagate and encourage a capitalist economy of *laissez-faire*⁹⁴ while the Soviet Union wanted to promote the idea of communism. This war was one of ideology than anything else.⁹⁵ The West (the United States and its allies) was pro-democracy and equality while the East (the Soviet Union) was more communist.

The end of the cold war in 1991⁹⁶ coincided with the democratic wave in the international community.⁹⁷ This saw a new idea emerge where liberal democracies are unlikely to go to war with each other.⁹⁸ Scholars that propagate the democratic peace thesis⁹⁹ propose the thought that, democracy will negate the effects of anarchy.

However, undemocratic states have coexisted with democratic states and have actively engaged in trade with each other. In the modern world, in order for a state to survive, its economic might in the international community plays a very important role. The economic prowess of a nation determines a lot of things about what it can and cannot do. The more economically powerful a country is, the more say it has on matters pertaining to the international community. One major platform for this is the United Nations. As can be seen during the debates and voting, the United States, who is the most economically as well as militarily strongest nation in the world, carries a lot of clout in the United Nations. This inequality within the international community has raised concerns over the years of the developing countries being forced into agreeing into treaties through undermining by the richer

⁹⁴ Free trade

⁹⁵ (Ideological Foundations of the Cold War)

⁹⁶ (Ideological Foundations of the Cold War)

⁹⁷ (Waltz, 2000)

⁹⁸ (Doyle, 1986)

⁹⁹ Waltz did not want to refer to the democratic peace theory as a theory. He referred to this as a thesis as he was not convinced of the idealist scholars' conclusions.

countries. This form of neo-colonialism has become more and more apparent especially in the trade sector.

4.4. Challenges of the Green Economy

Despite numerous international dialogues, world summits as well as research this has not resulted in a concrete solution to the negative environmental and social challenges manifested by the climate change issue.¹⁰⁰ In many ways the Green Economy is an attempt to correct the “dysfunctional” market that exists which has led to perverse outcomes on the environment as well as society’s wellbeing. This is because countries take advantage of others in the hope of staying ahead in the economic race. The Green Economy is a suggestion for an alternative way of doing business. However, the way the Green Economy has been presented leaves a lot of questions than answers.

This then brings us to the first challenge of the Green Economy. The risk for developing countries adopting the Green Economy is especially high.¹⁰¹ These risks include but are not limited to the following. One is the fact that this concept can be used as a means of enhancing conditionality in international trade. Already, many countries have reported that during bilateral and multilateral trade deals, conditions are placed that immediately put the developing countries at a disadvantage. This cannot be good for diplomacy as it creates mistrust and suspicion among states. This is not entirely at the fault of these countries. They are merely exploiting the hungry need that these developing countries have in an effort to catch up with the rest of the world. One country that has fully taken advantage of this is China. In the

¹⁰⁰ (Bosselmann, Brown, & Mackey)

¹⁰¹ (Economist, 2007)

last few years, China has pumped into Africa billions of US dollars in an effort to invest in these countries. This is however not without a price. In Zambia, China bought the Chambishi copper mine in 1998. In Kenya, China owns the country's largest coal concessions.¹⁰² If well thought out, the Chinese companies will make more money than invested as they have ownership of these resources. This means the developing countries lose out in the long run. This means that this would only further the international inequalities that exist, as developing countries would be at the shorter of the stick.

This brings us to the issue of protectionism. Developing countries could lose out if developed countries demand protection measures. Carbon emissions are a huge contributor to the Climate Change problem the world is facing now and so, laws that would lead to a more controlled carbon emission system are being discussed around the world. For the United States, a bill was tabled in 2007, which would establish a carbon price through a cap and trade system.¹⁰³ This means that import goods would have to be taxed based on the certification of their carbon content. This then means that the developing countries would cut the carbon intensity in their respective countries so as to avoid losing out on their markets.¹⁰⁴ The transition from the brown economy to the green economy could result in trade tensions due to the fact that there would be relocation of resources to help with the change.

Green protectionism brings with it concerns about the market dislocations and what would happen with the socio-economic changes¹⁰⁵. This is more a selfish aspect of the major players

¹⁰² (Naidoo, 2015)

¹⁰³ (Economist, 2007) Green Protectionism

¹⁰⁴ (Economist, 2007) Green Protectionism

¹⁰⁵ (UNCTAD, 2011)

that are currently running the markets. Due to their position in the society as the movers and shakers, if they are unable to see how they can increase their comparative advantage in going green, this can affect the implementation of any policies that are concerned with the Green Economy. Diplomacy is the key to making companies and the home countries of these countries to understand how important and sustainable the Green Economy is to them and their nationals. The Green Economy was an idea to help the world have an alternative way of doing business that would not only see the economy grow but would positively impact the environment and the society.

There is also the risk that the North will use the Green Economy to impose policies that would have to be adopted by the global South.¹⁰⁶ For the most part, the global South has been behind in terms of development whether technological or economically. However, the damage caused by the North to the environment due to the factories and industries has been way more detrimental than what the South has contributes. China and the United States of America are the biggest emitters of greenhouse gases. Despite being a propagator for the Kyoto Protocol, America declined to ratify the treaty¹⁰⁷. This was a huge blow to those who have been trying to find viable solutions in reducing greenhouse emissions. Imposing of policies to the developing nations will only create animosity and this would be a huge challenge in promoting environmental diplomacy, as it would also deter any chances for discussions on other solutions.

¹⁰⁶ Refers to the developing countries

¹⁰⁷ (Jens, 2006) The End of the Kyoto Protocol and the Return of Embedded Liberalism

The Green Economy is really a double-edged sword in terms of job creation. Many are hailing green initiatives, as the answer to create badly needed jobs¹⁰⁸. In reality, the green sector would provide new opportunities for jobs but on the other hand, many people will also lose their jobs as they phase out the more non-green sectors. This can be a huge challenge especially for countries that depend on the non-green sector to drive their economies.

There will also be other costs that would have to be considered, as some of these jobs would need people to be trained and have experience in this green sector. The developing countries stand at a disadvantage because they are already not as advanced technologically as the developed states. Training¹⁰⁹ people costs time and money, which can be quite bothersome especially if you are trying to grow your economy. Most of the experts in the field would naturally come from abroad and this could cause an influx of expatriates to the country to take on the new jobs. While foreign investment is good, it also can be hazardous to the nationals who would lose out on having a job simply due to the fact that they are not able to operate the new greener systems.

The Green Economy also creates a challenge described by UNEP as the inability of this concept in addressing a problem of growth. How would infinite growth be sustainable in a world that is finite? This is a question that the Green Economy is yet to clearly address. Over the years, we have already mined and to some extent almost depleted some of our natural resources. Some species of plants as well as animals have gone extinct in the last three decades. According to

¹⁰⁸ 'Green Economy jobs' will spring up in all sectors. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/10514475/Green-economy-jobs-will-spring-up-across-all-sectors.html>

¹⁰⁹ European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop). Future skill needs for the Green Economy.

WWF¹¹⁰, about 10,000 species go extinct every year, which is 1,000 and 10,000 times faster than the natural extinction rate¹¹¹. This is a huge challenge that still needs to be worked on. Talks are still going on about what exactly should be done to promote sustainability, however, the longer we talk and debate, the longer we take to having concrete solutions. Unlike other sectors, the damage to the environment is not something that is seen in one day, it takes a while before the damage is seen and felt. The same is true when trying to restore it. It is therefore important that everything that can be done be done soon.

Another challenge for states aiming to transition to the Green Economy is the budget allocation required to shift from the norm. For some countries, this may be relatively easy especially if they already have engrained in their society the concept of environmental protection. For instance, Peru has focused its transition on international trade mostly on biodiversity-derived products¹¹². According to Steiner, UNEP found that in 2012 the national trade liberalization policies helped to trigger expansion of the market. The export products were drawn from the local biodiversity. They also found that almost 90 percent of the export-oriented Peruvian companies held either organic or fair-trade certification, or both¹¹³.

For most developing countries, the budget is already a challenge. Transitioning to the Green Economy would require more investment from foreign companies. This can lead to the host country being held hostage to conform to deals that they may not necessarily benefit from. The

¹¹⁰ The World Wide Fund for Nature is an international non-governmental organization founded on April 29, 1961, working in the field of the biodiversity conservation, and the reduction of humanity's footprint on the environment.

¹¹¹ (WWF) http://wwf.panda.org/about_our_earth/biodiversity/biodiversity/

¹¹² (Steiner) The challenges of transition to a green economy. 2013

¹¹³ (Steiner) The challenges of transition to a green economy. 2013

key thus is improvement of trade discipline across the board. It is an unfortunate reality that the South loses out a lot in trade deals made by the West. This is because as Realist scholars state, the state is only after its own best interest. How countries will pursue the green industrial policy and steer their economies toward competitive advantage in producing new green goods and services will be an important factor that will affect implementation in the long run¹¹⁴. According to the UNCTAD ¹¹⁵document on Green Economy “The potential for rule breaking linked to the green economy highlights some questions about the applicability of the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. These rules are primarily focused on non-discrimination but allow derogations to deal with non-trade concerns such as environmental protection. As a wide range of products are important for a green economy, countries may need improved trade disciplines across the board, including in areas such as subsidies, technical barriers to trade, trade-related investment measures, government procurement, and general exceptions under General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)¹¹⁶ and export restrictions.”

Another challenge that presents itself in the implementation of the Green Economy is that of incentives. Many countries are reluctant to go green because they feel that they would lose out or lose momentum¹¹⁷ in the economic race. While this might be true, some countries have worked out deals that would create incentives for these reluctant countries to embrace the Green Economy. This might work for a while but the truth of the matter is that unless the countries want to pursue this for their own need and want, this might just be a passing phase.

¹¹⁴ (UNCTAD, 2011)

¹¹⁵ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. This is a body of the United Nations that is responsible for dealing with development issues, especially with regards to international trade which is the main driver of development.

¹¹⁶ GATT was a multilateral agreement regulating international trade.

¹¹⁷ Many of these are the developing countries that feel that they already are disadvantaged.

Incentives have an expiry date. They only last until either party is in need of the other. If someone else provides a better deal, it is very easy for a state to backtrack on the initial deal. National interests always come first. That is not to say that the interests may be acceptable to the rest of the world.

Recently, the President of Zimbabwe¹¹⁸ shocked his fellow countrymen as well as the international community when he blamed¹¹⁹ his people for allowing the killing of Cecil¹²⁰ the lion. During his speech to his countrymen, he is quoted as saying, “Cecil the lion was yours, and you failed to protect him.” And concluded by saying “We were given a rich inheritance, of course, they may bite, but they are ours.” The truth of the matter is what he said was true. Many people may not want to agree but it makes sense. Unless the people-the individual-themselves are not keen on preserving their biodiversity, wildlife, forests and air, then the chances of the Green Economy failing is a huge possibility.

Countries that are especially developing claim that the Green Economy is just a means of slowing down their growth. This is because in the recent years, Africa, South Asia and South America have been experienced a surge in growth. This is happening while the North is facing financial crises¹²¹ with their banks and the economy. With such events taking place it is not surprising that some nations are a bit apprehensive. The idea that the whole world will benefit and be saved from impending doom is a very idealist notion. However, economics speaks

¹¹⁸ Robert Mugabe is one of the longest serving dictators of an African country.

¹¹⁹ (Sieff, 2015)

¹²⁰ This was a famous, well-loved local lion that was lured from a sanctuary and killed by Dr. Walter J. Palmer. He had paid to hunt the beast. The lion was part of a study

¹²¹ (Economist, Crash course, 2013) Although the financial crisis of 2008 affected the world, the North countries were especially hard hit.

volumes when it comes to benefits. Going green will propel better management of the ecosystems but will also result in slower growth, at least in the implementation period. The West is already the most industrialized nations. They can only keep improving on technology that most South nations are still trying to implement.

These South countries will need help in adopting these new policies and technology. As mentioned previously, this help can be in the form of incentives however, as all countries would be transitioning to this new Green Economy, they too might not be in a position to fully assist these countries. Monetary support would be needed for green technology transfer, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, mitigation of desertification, export capacity development in green sectors, capacity building on international standards and assistance on mainstreaming green economy policies into national economic, employment and trade policies¹²².

Privately owned companies whose main goods and/or services that are not “green” will especially lose out. According to Basselmann, Brown and Mackey¹²³, there is a real market price for these private companies going green. They further state, “fixing market failures is a prerequisite to advancing sustainable development.”

According to Emmanuel Kant, the cause of war is anything. Climate change is according to Wabukala¹²⁴; climate change is to blame for conflicts over resources and new epidemics. Resources are a necessity in trade. The current laissez-faire system we have purports to be one

¹²² (UNCTAD, 2011)

¹²³ (Bosselmann, Brown, & Mackey)

¹²⁴ Kenyan Anglican Archbishop. (Nziwili, 2015)

of free trade. However as much as trade and investment are good there are contentious winners and losers. It also provides for a cover of economic measures.

Another challenge to the Green Economy is that of illiteracy¹²⁵. Majority of the people on earth are not well educated on matters that directly affect them. Some to gain an unfair advantage in the market at the expense of the people has used this. Education is important because when people are unable to understand why they are being asked to change what they are used to, it becomes difficult.

Education alone is not sufficient to encourage the Green Economy. Behavioural change¹²⁶ is also necessary in inducing a global movement that not only the middle class and rich will understand. This is perhaps the most challenging of all. When a person living in the most remote areas where their only source of income is charcoal burning, it will be difficult for them to let go of this.

Attitude change in the consumers will have to change if the Green Economy is to survive past implementation. This is fundamental in the process of developing a Green Economy.¹²⁷

Access to energy is another challenge that must be tackled in order to enable the Green Economy to succeed. Many people in the world have limited access to energy. 22 percent of the global population living in developing countries has no access to electricity. According to the

¹²⁵ (United Nations Environment Programme, 2013)

¹²⁶ A shift to a green economy will require changes in behaviours and values all the way down to the individual, (Matson, 2011)

¹²⁷ (Matson, 2011)

International Energy Agency¹²⁸ nearly 97 percent of these people live in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. In the same breath, 4.7 percent of the global population, where half live in developing countries, rely on traditional biomass.¹²⁹ This problem provides a challenge to the implementation of a green economy due to the fact that many people are not able to access alternative means of energy that are safer for the environment; let alone have access to energy. Energy is imperative to the survival of man. More needs to be done in finding a reliable and easily accessible form of energy.

Some may suggest putting up solar panels or wind turbines to make remote areas have access to cleaner energy. The truth of the matter is that although the prices for the machines needed for this has reduced significantly over the last few years, it is nowhere near enough for the common man to afford. As more interest grows in cleaner renewable energy, some companies are still out for profit.

In the United Kingdom, there is growing concern of building wind turbines on farms and many are suggesting that they be built in the sea. This is also because there are subsidies with building the turbines off shore. However, as much as the energy is green, the electricity bills are still high because “generating green electricity has hit a record high as subsidies are handed to expensive offshore wind farms and household solar panels, new figures show.”¹³⁰

¹²⁸ This is an autonomous organisation which works to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy for its 29 member countries and beyond. The IEA has four main areas of focus: energy security, economic development, environmental awareness and engagement worldwide. (<http://www.iea.org/aboutus/>) (International Energy Agency, About us, 2013)

¹²⁹ (International Energy Agency, 2013)

¹³⁰ (Gosden & Kirkup, 2014)

If these prices are higher or as high as conventional energy, no one will see the benefits of going green. In this world, money talks and with more and more people being unable to afford their basic needs, it is difficult to ask them to spend more for the sake of the environment. Their immediate survival will supersede the survival of the planet.

A challenge that the Green Economy faces is that of weak regulatory frameworks.¹³¹ Each state is a sovereign and will do what is in its best interest. Without tough regulations, there will be those who will do their best to go against the agreements. Tougher regulatory frameworks would provide equal responsibility that if all adhere to will drive the economy in the same direction and save the planet.

Apart from weak regulatory frameworks, another challenge is that there is a lack of a strict enforcement mechanism. As stating previously, all states are inherently sovereign¹³². This means that no one can tell or demand a state to do something that they do not want to. The international community -according to idealists- come together for the sake of one goal that they all aspire for the sake of peace. Idealists such as Michael W. Doyle view human nature as being inherently good. If the state is an extension of the people living in them then the state too must be inherently good. That is why idealists believe that the international community comes together to try and resolve issues because they are peaceful and looking out for each other.

¹³¹ (UNCTAD, 2011)

¹³² According to Robert Jackson, sovereignty is a global system of authority. It is both the idea of supreme authority in the state and political and legal independence of geographically separate states. (Jackson, 2007)

From a realist perspective, states will sooner abandon a mutual cause if it is not beneficial to them. Taking an example from the political situation in Syria, the Security Council¹³³ should generally be the vanguards of peace and harmony. However, with the Syrian case, the five veto powers could not agree on the way forward on how to deal with the Syrian crisis that has seen thousands of people killed and many more displaced. Russia and China voted against¹³⁴ a resolution tabled by the UN that would condemn “grave and systematic human rights violations” in Syria. With such unlikelihood of cooperation and collaboration by the Member States, it is difficult to see how the Green Economy can succeed when people try to find ways to cut corners.

Poor economic infrastructures are another challenge to the Green Economy. This is especially rampant in developing countries. In many cases, these countries lack proper strategies¹³⁵ and guidelines that would enable them to grow and develop rather than be an impediment as is the case now. If these strategies and plans are the same when implementing the Green Economy, rather than see development, these countries will struggle.

Being a new concept, it will take time for some of the countries to adjust. This takes time, resources both in terms of human and financial and so a well thought out plan is imperative for this to succeed.

¹³³ The Security Council is the United Nations' most powerful body, with "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security." Five powerful countries sit as "permanent members" along with ten elected members with two-year terms. (UN Security Council)

¹³⁴ (UN Security Council, 2011) <http://www.un.org/press/en/2011/sc10403.doc.htm>

¹³⁵ (Adam Smith International)

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Green Economy is not a bad idea. It demonstrates the balance that the economy, society and environment have with each other. This is a fact that many knew but never truly understood. For far too long the trade and economic systems has marginalized many especially those in the developing countries.

At times, the developing countries were viewed as second-rate citizens and at times mocked for their traditional views about the environment. Their ancestors understood that we are one with our environment. For the mutual survival of both, we need to respect the environment. Without it, humanity as we know it can cease to exist.

The Green Economy is a great start to changing the way we think and do things but there is a worry that the Green Economy is just another fad that the West has come up with for another Green Movement. There are great opportunities to be explored with the Green Economy paradigm however; there are many more kinks that need to be worked out first.

Who are the key driving actors? Is it the governments? The individual? The companies? How will it ensure equitable distribution of wealth? How will production and efficiency answer the question of wealth distribution, equity and equality, and reduction of poverty? How does the Green Economy plan to collaborate with traditional concepts that already exist that are “green” but just did not have a name to it? These are but a few questions that the Green Economy needs to focus on answering.

The Green Economy has been proposed by some as a caveat in solving the world's problems with one solution. This is an almost impossible task as different states face different challenges especially when it comes to the environment. The Monsoon rains are not something that South American countries can relate too neither are earthquakes a challenge in Africa. These differences are not only found in the environmental area but also considering the economic capabilities of these countries. Therefore having a, one-size fits all approach is not necessarily the best way to go about promoting growth and economic stability.

The Green Economy in its relation to encouraging more talks on the environment is a welcomed idea especially in environmental diplomacy. Until the late 1970s, the environment rarely if at all, featured in discussions among states. With the environmental crisis being faced by many states, many have realized that a dialogue is key in finding durable solutions so that the future does not pay for our mistakes.

As we have used up most of our natural resources and continue to do so in the passing days, sustainability and environmental protection is our only chance to save what is left of the planet. We cannot continue to sit idly by and watch the destruction of the forests, oceans and biodiversity disappear day by day. It is thus our responsibility as individuals to lead the discussion on the environment, if not for us then for the sake of the future generations to come.

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