



## Benoit Girardin and the Policies of Sustainable Development: The Necessity for a Sustained Environmental Pedagogy

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### ABSTRACT

Sustainable development has over the years become so renowned particularly within the academic and the business world. That is, "Sustainability" as Bâc Dorin will put it, has been present for the last decades in academic papers, syllabuses of Faculties, boardrooms of local authorities and corporations, and offices of public relations officers. This research work, then has as its objective to examine the nature of the policies of sustainable development as per Benoit Girardin, who maintains that, the present generation attains its ultimate good, without disrupting the ability of the generation yet unborn to attain theirs. For this reason, politics to him should therefore ensure that accountability, efficiency and limitation are a prerequisite as far as the question of sustainable development is concerned. With justice considered and maintained as a fair system through democratic societies requiring that global crisis and more importantly, the conservation of nature is a concerned whose solution is only attainable through global efforts. However, haven acknowledged the fact that, Benoit Girardin's philosophical foundation on the question of sustainable development are situated within the liberal and neoliberal traditions, we intend to argue the fact that, by basing sustainable development, solemnly from this stand point, it will be incomplete to enforce and attained a more sustainably and friendly societies, given that, the ideology behind this cult is backed by the zeal for profit, but embracing and taking in to consideration the implementation of a sustained environmental pedagogy, that emulates an African ecobio-communitarianism, which recognizes and accepts the inter-dependence and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans will go a long way to enforcing sustainable development by enabling us go beyond his liberal and neo-liberal ideologies, while stimulating individuals consciousness, as well as ecological consciousness to better construct a more effective and sustainable societies beginning from our local through the national and then from a global position.

Keywords: *Policies, Sustainable Development, Sustainability, Democracy, Institutions, Conviction, Justice, Environmental pedagogy.*

### INTRODUCTION

The last face of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as the early face of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seems and has equally proven to be the most affected face of mankind's history, as far as his relationship with the environment are concerned. Climatic changes and other environmental hazards have fast become a global challenge and a threat to humanity as a whole, coupled with poverty and inequality. And as a matter of fact, an urgent need for a practical approach to remedy the situation is required, which according to contemporary thinkers like Benoit Girardin<sup>1</sup>, will avoid being too theoretical. Judging from the above, it is evidently clear and justifiable why the term Sustainable development has in this regard become so renowned in both the academic and the business world. That is, "Sustainability" has been present for the last decades in academic papers, syllabuses of Faculties, boardrooms of local authorities and corporations, and offices of public relations officers.<sup>2</sup>

The term sustainability first appeared in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, relating to forest management but was until the late 1980s, that the ideas of sustainability and development were connected. It was thanks to the Bruntland Commission, which in its report, entitled *Our Common Future*, brought

<sup>1</sup> Benoit Girardin is a former Swiss ambassador and philosopher of the contemporary with several scientific works. His philosophical views are centered in viewing the world as a global village which should promote humanity through sustainable political actions thereby promoting justice as a fair system through democratic values, maintained through what is known as the three foundational fold (efficiency, accountability and limitation to power) though *ethics in politics* to him does not strive for an ideal or perfect [politics] but merely optimal politics (Benoit Girardin., *Ethics in Politics: Why it Matters More Than Ever and How It Can Make a Different*, Geneva, Globethics.Net, 2012, p.156.) This is because ethics to him adds a decisive value to politics by securing fair treatment of political stakeholders, stressing equity and fairness, reminding us that the limitation of power is essential in politics, and adding a long-term perspective. By contrast, impunity, arbitrariness and cruelty cannot count on wide support, either in individual societies or in the community of nations (*Ibid.* pp., 156-157).

<sup>2</sup> Bâc Dorin P., *A History of The Concept of Sustainable Development: Literature Review*, University of Oradea, Faculty of Economics, 1st – 3rd Universitatii St. Oradea, dbac@uoradea.ro, <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.532.7232&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, pp. 575-580.

to light the term sustainable development, in an effort to link out the issues of economic development and environmental stability.<sup>3</sup> It was in this line, that Bâc Dorin Paul makes out that, sustainable development, as a well-defined concept, has emerged from a series of Conferences and Summits, where influential people have tried to agree on how to tackle the “burning issues” of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century ranging from poverty, increasing inequality, environmental and human health degradation<sup>4</sup>.

Sustainable development, despite the divergence in comprehension and manner of approaches, could be defined from a general perspective as an [organizing principle](#), for meeting [human developmental](#) goals while simultaneously sustaining the ability of natural systems to provide the [natural resources, ecosystem services](#) on which the economy and society depend. That is, the desired results of a society where living conditions and resources are used, to continue to meet human needs without undermining the [integrity](#) and stability of the natural system.<sup>5</sup> But according to the National Strategy of Sustainable Development, it holds of sustainable development as “...the society’s development that creates the possibility for achieving overall wellbeing for the present and the future generations through combining environmental, economic, and social aims of the society without exceeding the allowable limits of the effect on the environment”<sup>6</sup> but from the Girardinean perspective which aligns to the [Brundtland Report](#) of 1987, sustainable development is that “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>7</sup> This then prompted Girardin to consider politics as “an essential human activity-essential in building societies and communities based on rules, laws and a balance of conflicting interest.”<sup>8</sup>

Paradoxically, even though we have had diverse definitions and approaches to viewing sustainable development, emphases have thus been laid on that offered in the Brundtland report, for reasons outlining that, it has been pressed on key concepts like:

*The concept of needs, in particular, the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given,*

*The idea of limitation imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs*<sup>9</sup>

This reason alone will justify why some 20 to 30 years ago, the United Nations through its initiative known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or the Earth Summit acknowledges the threats of climate change on our environment. Which equally prompted the then United Nations secretary general Ban Ki-moon to see climate change as an ethical issue with serious implication for the well-being of our generation and those that will follow which therefore requires a global solution that takes in to account the views and needs of all who shares Mother Earth.<sup>10</sup> This is because, the threats are visible and more particularly on the loss of our biodiversity which Benoit Girardin equally considers as the “well of knowledge and a measure of the health of ecosystems,”<sup>11</sup> And to the United Nations as one of the earth’s most important resources. This therefore shows that a large or a sudden drop in biodiversity will therefore serves as a warning, explaining why, Kseniya Kovalenko and Nataliya Kovalenko proclaims thus that,

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, humanity began to feel the approach of an ecological crisis. The ecological crisis of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century has a qualitatively different nature compared to all previous crises. This is the first crisis that has engulfed the entire planet and completely conditioned not by natural, but by technical and production reasons. The rate of change in the parameters of the biosphere turned out to be hundreds and thousands of times greater than the rate of its natural evolution.<sup>12</sup>

In this sense, understanding and taking the concept of sustainable development is necessarily very urgent, both from the ecological, economic, geographical, cultural, and political plan. Since global challenges like climatic changes, in particular, has been attributed to the anthropocentric or the egocentric activities of the human civilization, which in turn has led to an increase in the earth’s temperature and the degradation of the ozone layer<sup>13</sup> through what Benoit Girardin will align to, as resulting “... from more than one kind of emission: CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, some hydrofluorocarbons, lower atmospheric ozone, and dark soot particles.”<sup>14</sup> This view of Girardin is indifferent to those outlined by Dr. S K. Palita head of the biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources Central at the University of Orissa were to him, “these human activities are closely linked with increasing concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and other greenhouse gases known to trap the heat from solar radiation in the upper layers of

<sup>3</sup> Emas, R., *The Concept of Sustainable Development: Definition and Defining Principles*, Florida International University, Brief for GSDR 2015, <https://asset-pdf.scinapse.io/prod/2184349672/2184349672.pdf>, P. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bâc Dorin P., *A History of The Concept of Sustainable Development: Literature Review*, P. 575.

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO, *Sustainable Development*, 3 August 2015, Retrieved 6 September 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Remigijus Ciegis, Jolita Ramanauskiene, Bronislovas Martinkus, *The Concept of Sustainable Development and its Use for Sustainability Scenarios*, ISSN 1392-2785 *Inzinerine Ekonomika-Engineering Economics* (2). 2009, Downloads/11609-Article%20Text-33518-1-10-20150410.pdf, P. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 166.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Plachciak, *Sustainable Development in Postmodern Society, economics and sociology*, vol. 3, no 2, 2010, pp. 86-91, P. 87.

<sup>10</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 38.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 116.

<sup>12</sup> Kseniya Kovalenko and Nataliya Kovalenko, *Ecological Problem of Modernity as a global problem of humanity*, MATEC Web of Conferences 193, 01033 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1051/mateconf/201819301033>, P. 2.

<sup>13</sup> Kseniya Kovalenko and Nataliya Kovalenko, *Ecological problem of modernity as a global problem of humanity*, P. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 113.

the earth's atmosphere."<sup>15</sup> These activities are generally a threat since this emission of pollutants into the air can result in changes to the climate, justifying Girardin's assertion that "the earth is warming, and we are warming it."<sup>16</sup> The United Nations through its [Sustainability](#) goals, such as the current UN-level on [Sustainable Development Goals](#), address global challenges like poverty, inequality, [climate change](#), environmental degradation, peace, and justice. It is equally thanks to this modern concept of sustainable development which is mostly based on this 1987 [Brundtland Report](#), rooted in earlier ideas about [sustainable forest management](#) and 20<sup>th</sup> century environmental concerns, that has now developed or shifted its focus more towards the economic and social development, not forgetting the protection of the environment.

Prior to this, Girardin held that "Sustainability is [all] about stabilizing the currently disruptive relationship between earth's two most complex systems – human culture and the living world."<sup>17</sup> The question that preoccupies us in this research work is that of examining the policies of sustainable development according to Benoit Girardin, who in an effort, maintains that, the present generation attains its ultimate good, without disrupting the ability of the generation yet unborn to do same. However, haven acknowledged the fact that, Benoit Girardin's philosophical foundation on the question of sustainable development, are situated within the liberal and neoliberal traditions, and given that, the common ideology behind this cult is backed by the zeal for profit, isn't it hypocritical and risky to consider sustainable development from this position? Or Better still, by emphasizing sustainable development on the bases of policies/politics, relying on a global scale (justice) with no consideration for an emulative environmental pedagogy, isn't it some sort of business as usual? In responding to the above interrogations, we shall first and famous present the bases by which constitutes Benoit Girardin's foundation to the policies of sustainable development.

## 1. CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES: A FOUNDATION TO THE EMERGENCE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

Challenges' rocking our contemporary societies ranges from poverty, inequalities, health problems and ecological crises, need to be, handle with extreme consciousness. Global warming and pollution of all sorts among other menace have proven to be a threat to humanity's stayed on planet earth. Gaia as Lovelock held could have been at a revenge or vanishing point, since it can no longer support our extravagancies. Notwithstanding, the emergence of the concept of sustainable development has risen from a number of conferences to help maintained a sustainable atmosphere for humanity. It is during this period that politics will come to have a clear link or connectivity with development that maintain environmental stability. In this regard, economic benefit will be guided by politics in policy definition for an environmental sustainability.

### 1.1. Pollution, a menace to both human health and environmental degradation

The footprint of pollution is not gone unnoticed without leaving its marks on the degradation of the environment, thereby causing a loss to its beauty. We could then categorize this act as revenge from our planet, since it can no longer contains man's excesses which have given room to numerous ecological crises. Pollution as it stand is the process of making land, water, air or other parts of the environment dirty and unsafe or unsuitable to use. In recent years, worries have been about the extinction of species, some about the pollution of our physical surroundings, yet others about changes in our climate which are all related problems. Extinction which is often attributed to pollution, evidence are mounting that extinction can equally result from climate change. Pollution is a major source of climate change, and so on.<sup>18</sup> Pollution which is the introduction of a contaminant in to a natural environment equally threaten the *biological* basis of human life<sup>19</sup> that is, it has affected more than 200 million people worldwide in this line, Sahotra Sarkar remarks that "pollution biologically threatens human health and life in the short term;[while] climate change is similarly threatening in the long term".<sup>20</sup>

Moreover, according to a study from [Pure Earth](#), a non-profit environmental organization, in one of its studies, it is revealed that in some parts of the world's worst polluted places, babies are born with birth defects, children have lost 30 to 40 IQ points, and life expectancy may be as low as 45 years because of cancers and other diseases. In addition to its 2017 report, entitled *pollution is the world's largest environmental cause of diseases and premature death*. It was equally revealed by its President [Richard Fuller](#) and Dr. [Philip Landrigan](#), serving as co-chairs of the [Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health](#) that: "Pollution is the largest environmental cause of death in the world today, killing 3 times more people than AIDS/HIV, tuberculosis and malaria combined, and 15 times more deaths and war and other forms of violence"<sup>21</sup>.

Taking from the dangers as stated above on humans in particular and on the environment in general, the lancet Commission proposes that, Governments should integrate pollution challenges and control strategies into planning processes, there by asking for support from development assistance agencies which designs and implement programs, that helps reduce pollution, and save lives. Since it's estimated that, in 2015 alone, diseases caused by pollution

<sup>15</sup> Dr. S.K Palita, *Climate Change and its impacts on Biodiversity*, Researchgate, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326252109>, July 2018, P. 27.

<sup>16</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P.113.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 74.

<sup>18</sup> Sahotra Sarkar., *Biodiversity and Environmental Philosophy: An Introduction*, First Published, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005, P. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Lancet Commission, *Pollution is the world's largest environmental cause of diseases and premature death*, Icahn school of Medicine at Mount Sinai, global alliance on health and pollution, Infographic © 2017 Mount Sinai Health System, [https://gahp.net/wpcontent/uploads/2017/03/Sinai\\_Commission\\_on\\_Pollution\\_and\\_Health\\_Infographic\\_final\\_LETTERSIZED.pdf](https://gahp.net/wpcontent/uploads/2017/03/Sinai_Commission_on_Pollution_and_Health_Infographic_final_LETTERSIZED.pdf).

were responsible for 9 million premature deaths, which amounted to 16% of global deaths.<sup>22</sup> This pursues as an emergency since humanity is placed on a danger, explaining why

The 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity, held in Nagoya in October 2010, agreed the Aichi Target: a voluntary rather than binding agreement to halt over-fishing, control invasive species, reduce pollution, minimise the pressure on coral reefs from ocean acidification, and halt the loss of genetic diversity in agricultural ecosystems. It also agreed a framework for cooperation and incentives in the Nagoya Protocol. According to Jim Leape, International Director of the World Wildlife Fund, “This agreement reaffirms the fundamental need to conserve nature as the very foundation of our economy and our society. Governments have sent a strong message that protecting the health of the planet has a place in international politics.”<sup>23</sup>

The effects of pollution have proven to know no boundary. Air pollution among others occurs when particles are been release into the air, from burning fuels which causes dangerous gases, such as sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and chemical vapors. In this parameter, Al Jazeera on an article marking June 5<sup>th</sup> which is observed and set aside globally led by the United Nations as the world environment day, which seeks to create environmental awareness on the slogan ‘*only one earth campaign*’, reveals that, “about seven million premature death happen every year due to air pollution, or one in nine of all deaths. Nine out of 10 people breathe unclean air, making it the most significant environmental health risk of our time”.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, pollution also threatens many other forms of life wherever it occurs: oil spills from tankers are notorious for devastating marine life.<sup>25</sup>

### 1.2. An increase in the earth’s temperature and what it means

Global warming which could be seen as surpassing terrorism is one of the factors pursuing a threat to humanity, necessitating a practical solution to which contributed to the emergence of sustainable ideas. Climatic changes considered a global threat is because, not only a group or race of people are targeted, it goes beyond our boundaries and human ideologies, which the United Nation has taken up an initiative to help regulates the situation caused by an increase in greenhouse gases, leading to an uproar in the earth’s temperature. Obliging that “negotiation on climate change are and must be global”,<sup>26</sup> since the last quarters of the 20<sup>th</sup> and early quarters of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries have proven to be the most affected faces in the history of mankind, which is as a result of this climatic changes.<sup>27</sup> This reason alone, will explains why some 20 years ago, the United Nations through its initiative known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or the earth summit acknowledges the threats or challenges of climate change to our environment. This is because the threats are visible on the loss of our biodiversity which is been considered as “a well of knowledge and a measure of the health of ecosystems.”<sup>28</sup> Which prompted the then United Nations secretary Ban Ki-moon to see climate change as an ethical issue with serious implication for the well-being of our generation and those that will follow which therefore requires a global solution that takes in to account the views and needs of all who shares Mother Earth<sup>29</sup>

This therefore shows that a large or sudden drop in biodiversity serves as a warning.<sup>30</sup> Some years back, 193 nations sign a convention aimed at to limit the decline in biodiversity. And to this effect, an intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) and the intergovernmental science policy on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES) were created to help identify the course and consequences so as to better monitor the effectiveness of decided measures and implementation, since it’s no more a matter to be taken lightly.

Moreover, this major increase in the earth’s temperature has been attributed to the anthropocentric or the egocentric nature of man and more importantly to note, on the neo-liberal market forces whose “interest [...] is business while global temperatures irreversibly increase[s]”<sup>31</sup> this adherent behaviour leads and “results from more than one kind of emission: CO<sub>2</sub>, methane, some hydro fluorocarbons, lower atmospheric ozone and dark soot particles.”<sup>32</sup> Emission of pollutants in to the air can result in changes to the climate. Ozone in the atmosphere warms the climate while different components or particular matter can have either warming or cooling effects on the climate, and thus, the earth’s atmosphere traps energy from the sun as heat and keeps our planet warm through a process called the greenhouse effect. These naturally occurring greenhouse gases which are Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), and water vapours are responsible for slow increase in earth’s temperature, which is necessary. But now, human activities have caused a significant and continuing increase in the levels of Greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. More Greenhouse gases means the atmosphere traps

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 18.

<sup>24</sup> Al Jazeera Staff., *Infographic: How can you reduce your carbon footprint?*, published by on the 5 Jun, 2022, Al Jazeera media network©2022.

<sup>25</sup> Sahotra Sarkar., *Biodiversity and Environmental Philosophy*, P. 8.

<sup>26</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 17.

<sup>27</sup> Kinyuy Yuven, F., *Political Consciousness as the Ultimate Good of a Society: A critical study of Ethics in Politics by Benoit Girardin (2012)*, a dissertation submitted to the Department of Philosophy in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the award of master of arts in philosophy at the University of Dschang, defended on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2021, (Unpublished), P. 68.

<sup>28</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, op. cit, P. 116.

<sup>29</sup> Op.cit, P. 38.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 116.

<sup>31</sup> Ezekiel Kikoh, Kiming Ignatius Ngala, *From Sustainable Development to Sustainable Retreat, Brundtland to Lovelock: what has Africa in it?*, Journal of Developing Economies, Vol.3, Issue 1, pp 1- 14, 2021, P. 9.

<sup>32</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics* P.113.

more heat.<sup>33</sup> Prompting the Cameroonian bioethicist André Liboire Tsala Mbani to holds that the planet is suffocating.<sup>34</sup> To him as has already been our point of discussion, this suffocation is as a result of emission of greenhouse in to the atmosphere necessitating that, « Si rien n'est fait pour réduire considérablement les émissions de gaz à effet de serre (GES), à défaut de les endiguer complètement, la Terre pourrait se réchauffer de 1, 4°C à 5, 8°C d'ici à la fin du siècle »<sup>35</sup>.

### 1.3. The Conservatist Approach: Principles for Sustainable Development

As a result of the glimcy experiences, a gloomy prediction about the development of the entire biosphere, and the continuity of existence in biological species and mankind in particular on earth has enable to questioned the advanced technological stand point of the western civilization, which is undoubtedly spearheading the cause of the substantial changes that seem threatening on the ecological balance. Man's anthropocentric tendencies towards nature has not only become news on the worlds political agenda, but has equally stimulated research that has given birth to the development of sustainable technology as solutions. A variety of philosophical reflections on man's fundamental relations to nature, and his place in the cosmos has typically been the effort of the United Nations organization in recognizing this global threat towards humanity. This effort has led to the declarations of a United Nations charters and the formation of various commissions that saw the principles of sustainable development being laid.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) founded in 1948 working for the conserving and protection of nature and [sustainable use](#) of the [natural resources](#), in a bid to guarantee our biodiversity brought forth the idea that, the World ecosystems are suffering from anthropogenic and natural pressure<sup>36</sup>. Reason which the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) has developed analogous criteria for the Red List of Threatened Species in order to perform similar risk assessments on ecosystems, by gathering and analysing of data, it equally carries on field projects and research. Its mission has been to "influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable."<sup>37</sup> Since the conservation of nature involves "lowering [the] rates of deforestation and building capacity in renewable energy"<sup>38</sup> likewise the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean, it equally made advances on improving and accelerating activities as identified in its report of April 2019 according to which, the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Mediterranean 2016-2025 aimed at "recognizing and protecting the climate adaptation and mitigation services of natural ecosystems".<sup>39</sup> It was from this ideas that the United Nation [World Charter for Nature](#) (UNWCN) was equally born in a bid to help combat the excessive use or exploitation of nature by man. It expressed its conviction that the benefits which could be obtained from nature depended on the maintenance of natural processes and on the diversity of life forms and that those benefits were jeopardized by the excessive exploitation and the destruction of natural habitats.<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, "the global environment needs substantive and procedural protection from the adverse impacts of social and economic development."<sup>41</sup> Which great minded confer initiatives top on its agenda a meted desire towards the earth's stability. In this bid, the emergence of the concept of sustainable development was born as a result of continues effort among which was the 1972 conference on the human environment held in Stockham Sweden. The peculiarity of this conference lies in the fact that, it leads to the creation of the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) which had as mission to provide leadership and encourage partnership in the caring of environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and people to improve their quality of life without compromising or hindering that of future generations.

This conference played a very important role in the subsequent promotion and adoption of an international agreement concerned with ocean dumping, pollution from ships and endangered species trade. It equally adopted what was later on known as the "*Stockham Declaration on the Human Environment*" which included a forward looking principle by which as seen in its 13<sup>th</sup> principle, had as objective to declare the need for integration and coordination in development and planning which encourages environmental protection

Again, in 1983, the United Nations General Assembly created the World Commission on Environment and Development which was later on oden as the Brundtland Commission and in 1987, the commission published the Brundtland report which was entitled *Our Common Future*. Providing the most politically significant definition of sustainable development as that development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs. Furthermore, the *Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 or Rio earth summits* laid down activities which were

<sup>33</sup> Dr. S.K Palita., "Climate Change and its impacts on Biodiversity", Researchgate, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326252109>, July 2018, Pp.27-28.

<sup>34</sup> Tsala Mbani. A.L., « Les enjeux d'un humanisme écologique », in *Intel l'actuel ,Revue de lettres et sciences humaines*, n° 13, Université de Dschang, 2015, P. 212.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, P., 213.

<sup>36</sup> Noh JK, Echeverria C, Kleemann J, Koo H, Fürst C, Cuenca P, *Warning about conservation status of forest ecosystems in tropical Andes: National assessment based on IUCN criteria*. PLoS ONE 15(8): e0237877, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237877>, P. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Kenneth Iain MacDonald, *IUCN: A History of Constraint*, Text of an Address given to the Permanent workshop of the Centre for Philosophy of Law Higher Institute for Philosophy of the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL), Louvain-la-neuve, [http://perso.uclouvain.be/marc.maeschalck/MacDonaldInstitutional\\_and\\_IUCN-17.0203.pdf](http://perso.uclouvain.be/marc.maeschalck/MacDonaldInstitutional_and_IUCN-17.0203.pdf). P. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> United Nations General Assembly, World Charter for Nature, 28 October 1982, <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/37/a37r007.htm>.

<sup>41</sup> Harold W. Wood, Jr, *The United Nations World Charter for Nature: The Developing Nations' Initiative to Establish Protections for the Environment*, *Ecology Law Quarterly*, vol.12, 1985, pp.977-996, P. 977.

explicitly concerned with sustainable development it is thus concluded that it was at this Earth Summit that the concept of sustainable development truly arrives on the international scene. Likewise the Kyoto Protocol as one of the international treaty, extended the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that committed state parties to reduce greenhouse gases emissions based on the scientific consensus that global warming is occurring and it is extremely likely to be assessed that these emissions or CO<sub>2</sub> are predominantly caused by humans.

A Millennium Summit was again in 2002 held in New York where a *Millennium Development Goals* were agreed upon, among which was that “livelihoods and well-being of the world’s poor are now conceptualized in terms of access to opportunity and absence of insecurity and vulnerability”.<sup>42</sup> Later on, in 2002, a World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was equally held in Johannesburg at this time, it reconfirmed the millennium goal and complimented them by setting up several additional ones such as “halving the proportion of people lacking access to basic sanitation; minimizing harmful effects from chemicals, and halting the loss of biodiversity”<sup>43</sup> several authors consider or see this summit as a breakthrough since to them, it registered “progress in moving the concept [of sustainable development] toward[s] a more productive exploration of the relationship between economic development and environmental quality”.<sup>44</sup>

## 2: GIRARDIN’S PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

Benoit Girardin’s project on a politics/ policies of sustainable development, took upon to show that values such as peace, stability and justice are values for human flourishing, which are attainable in societies that promote democracy thereby maintaining transparency, responsibility, accountability and limitations through fair institutions. Individual consciousness is therefore seen as a starting point of attaining these objectives. Girardin became certain that for man to do away with his crises, embracing peace and justice together with environmental justice, he needed to live in a normative state, in which ethical values will serve as the bases of whatever he does. In this optic, conviction became optimal enabling diverse individuals to cohabitate by living within the cardinal value, while reconciling their differences for a sustainable progress. In this parameters, one of United Nations principles for its 2030 agenda as highlighted by UNESCO, maintains and acknowledges the fact that, “sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace and security and commits to intercultural understanding, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility”<sup>45</sup>

### 2.1. Individuals Conviction as a Model to Sustainability

As Ann Dale remarks, “all human problems on earth are nested in consciousness”<sup>46</sup> this shows that crises effecting humanity ranging from social, political economic and ecological are a crises of conscience, since man’s action accounts for the results of that particular act. This reason, best explains why Benoit Girardin accords value to individual’s conviction as far as the implementation of environmental justice is concerned. Implementation first of all begins from the individual level, since “it is assumed that if leaders are honest, just and respectful of the truth, countries will be managed honestly, justly, and with due respect for truth and democracy.”<sup>47</sup> This enables a sustainable atmosphere, justifying why a rapid historical overview indicates that individual ethics is often transferred directly to the political sphere<sup>48</sup>

From the ecological plan, individual ethics permits one to question if their action conforms to life on earth, by taking in to account the yet unborn. That is, responsibility towards the future. Conviction calls on an individual to have the ability to recognise, interpret and act upon multiple principles and values, in accordance to the standards within a given context. In this line, Hans Jonas in his thesis of a new objective and cosmological responsibility, a new dimension is given for human action, according to which relies, and is expressed through the reformulation of the Kantian categorical imperative. Hans Jonas bases his moral imperative on ontology, which explains why he equally granted human being a very special place in his ethics, because of his human capabilities in realizing his duties and responsibly. In this optic, man is then cautioned in his acts, that is:

Act so that the effects of your action are compatible with the permanence of genuine human life. We must ensure that the effects of our actions do not destroy future “genuine human life”. To ensure “genuine human life” means to protect the future humanity’s autonomy, dignity, integrity and vulnerability<sup>49</sup>

Judging from the above recommendations accounts for the reason with which *The United Nations World Charter for Nature* opted that the implementation of the charter should concern, all persons, in accordance with their national legislation, so that they have the opportunity to participate, individually or with others, in the formulation of decisions of direct concern to their environment, by having access and means to redress the damage or degradation suffered by their environment.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Adger Neil, Winkles Alexandra, *Handbook of Sustainable Development*, op.cit, P. 194.

<sup>43</sup> Bâc Dorin Paul, *A History of the Concept of Sustainable Development: Literature Review*, op.cit, P. 579.

<sup>44</sup> Sisay Asefa, *The Economics of Sustainable Development*, op.cit, P. 1.

<sup>45</sup> UNESCO, *Moving Forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, P. 3.

<sup>46</sup> Dale, A., *The Politics of Sustainable Development* Royal Roads University, P. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 45

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Hein Berdinesen, *On Hans Jonas’ “The Imperative Of Responsibility”*, *philosophia-bg.com*, *Philosophia* 17/2017, [https://philosophiajournal.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/16-28\\_phil\\_17-2017\\_hein-berdinesen\\_01.pdf](https://philosophiajournal.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/16-28_phil_17-2017_hein-berdinesen_01.pdf), P. 18

<sup>50</sup> Harold W. Wood, Jr, *The United Nations World Charter for Nature: The Developing Nations’ Initiative to Establish Protections for the Environment*, *Ecology Law Quarterly*, vol.12, 1985, pp.977-996, P. 977.



Moreover, Nkwameh Nkrumah, while developing his philosophical consciencism, clearly stated and acknowledged the fact that, his consciencism “ seeks to promote individual development, but in such a way that the conditions for the development of all become the conditions for the development of each; that is, in such a way that the individual development does not introduce such diversities as to destroy the egalitarian basis.”<sup>51</sup> This from the ecological perspective equally maintains on the preservation of the biodiversity which is considered to be “a well of knowledge and a measure of the health of ecosystems.”<sup>52</sup> In this optic, individual ethics does not only creates awereness, but equally enables grounds for a collective action towards sustainable relations with the environment, constituting a sound foundation towards the politics of sustainable development, which futher creates grounds if people are to live together aswell as in harmony with nature. At this point, we understand why Linda J. Skitka and Christopher W. Bauman , referes to conviction as having a strong and absolulute belief that something is right or wrong, moral or immoral<sup>53</sup>. Which Girardin, understood through the Kantian Maxim of universalism, stipulating that: “act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature.”<sup>54</sup> To Girardin, such a stand will serves as a foundation not only to a given state, but to a cosmopolitan culture. Which is seen in his assertion that, “such a basic principle then lays the basis for cosmopolitant culture, peace and trade.”<sup>55</sup> This explains why Roger Mondoué had erelong procliamed that « ...l'individu doit prendre conscience qu'il n'est pas seulement un être-pour-soi; il est aussi un être-pour-autrui .»<sup>56</sup> At this point in time, sustainaible actions becomes center of man's well being from diversed perspectives,with managing diversity as setting a path for global hamoney. For the neoliberal logic stipulates that we have just one earth and our collective action determince our stay.

Basically, when a group of people are able to share a common ‘frame of mind’ with respect to their sense of time, space purpose and rules for action...human goals may be achieved, often with great ease and satisfaction<sup>57</sup> this, has then been an obligation set forth by the United Nations to maintain peaceful societies by holding in its 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights that “Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible”<sup>58</sup> Girardin on his part then added that, equity is essential if people are to live together.<sup>59</sup>Because, “when we downplay on our diversities, the consequences are un avoidable.”<sup>60</sup> A clear set of agreed principles provides a sound basis to accommodate the diversity of faiths, customs practices as long as they do not undermine social coherence.<sup>61</sup>

To the author of ethics in politics, political leaders who are committed to ethical values may be the engine of long term vision...<sup>62</sup> since “virtues are a political asset for leaders and that personal ethics matters...”<sup>63</sup> more especially in the implementations of dicistions and more importantly a friendly environmental decisions. At the end of the twentieth century fresh and radical thinking sought a solid foundation on which societies might find a way of living together.<sup>64</sup> Which the United Nations has been quick to hold that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”<sup>65</sup> With diversity become more and more high on the political agenda. For a state that wants to steer its own ship has to show a solid ability to manage a diversity of cultures and behaviors as a social asset, within a set of social reference values, that keep society together, coherent and united<sup>66</sup>

## 2.2. Sustainability Through the Politics of Reconciliation

Reconciliation which harbors several meanings and applications could be situated within our context as a conceptual core vised on an individual to reconcile to her fate, or members of an association, reconciling after some internal strife. Reconciliation could equally be pursued as a political goal,<sup>67</sup> which is consciously driven. For this reason, George Nickolas Fourlas in his thesis held of reconciliation as a specific sort of enactive process that attempts to repair relations wherein the coordinating conditions that come prior to cooperative meaning are absent or highly asymmetrical.<sup>68</sup> In a society like ours,

<sup>51</sup> Nkrumah, K., *Consciencism*, in, Lee, Hord, Fred, (Mzee Lasana Okpara) and Lee, Jonathan Scott, *I Am Because We Are: Readings In Africana philosophy*, revised edition, edited with introductions, Amherst and Boston, University of Massachusetts press, 2016, P. 68.

<sup>52</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*..opcit, P. 116.

<sup>53</sup> Skitka, L.J and Bauman, C.W., *Moral Conviction and Political Engagement*, Article in Political Psychology, Published by Reseachgate, February 2008, [Http://10.1111/J.1467-9221.2007.00611.X](http://10.1111/J.1467-9221.2007.00611.X), P. 2.

<sup>54</sup> Kant, I, cited by Girardin, B, in *Ethics in Politics*, P. 31.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Mondoué, R., *nouveaux philosophes et antimarxisme : Autour de Marx est mort de Jean-Marie Benoist*, Yaoundé, L'Harmattan, 2009, P., 141.

<sup>57</sup> Dale, A., *The Politics of Sustainable Development Royal Roads University*, P. 1.

<sup>58</sup> United Nations (Un), *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Right 1948*, Published at [Http://Www.Jus.Uio.No/Lm/En/Manifest/Un.Universal.Declaration.Of.Human.Rights.1948](http://Www.Jus.Uio.No/Lm/En/Manifest/Un.Universal.Declaration.Of.Human.Rights.1948), Copyright(C) 1949 United Nations (Un), P. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 71.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 127.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 68.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 50

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 55.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 32.

<sup>65</sup> United Nations (Un), *United Nations Universal Declaration Of Human Right 1948*, P. 3.

<sup>66</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 67.

<sup>67</sup> Moellendorf, D., *Reconciliation as a Political Value*, Journal of Social Philosophy, Vol. 38 No. 2, Summer 2007, 205–221.© 2007 Blackwell Publishing, Inc. P. 205.

<sup>68</sup> Fourlas, G.N., *Justice as Reconciliation: Political Theory In a World of Difference*, a Dissertation Presented to the Department of Philosophy and the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, University of Oregon, September 2014, P. 2.

faced with numerous crises, which are disruptive to both nature and man, its therefore a clear prove that one-working alone has not taken a path to progress and peace, since there is no progress without peace and no peace without justice. This is because, after every situation like wars within states and inter states or nations, reconciliation has a greater role to render. For this reason, the aftermath of major wars like the Second World War, political decisions and attitudes taken by aggressor's states differs significantly.<sup>69</sup>We need to reconcile so as to come out of our differences for what unites us is greater than what separates us, and as Marcus Aurelius affirmed, "We should constantly think of the universe as a single living being, we must recognize ourselves as a limb of a larger body and work together since you yourself are one of the parts that serve to perfect a social system, let your every action contribute to the perfecting of social life."<sup>70</sup> For this fact, Girardin aired that "In the aftermath of conflict, politicians and people have to decide whether revenge is an effective remedy. They have to choose between an all-inclusive justice and a justice of the victors. They have to set priorities between truth and justice to best promote reconciliation."<sup>71</sup>

A good example of such could be seen in South Africa, Rwanda and Northern Ireland as pointed out by Girardin. Particularly in South Africa, the Independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission, chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was created, whose aim was to reach a sound level of justice without fuelling feelings of revenge and allow a form of punishment and an end to the cycle of violence. Amnesty was granted on certain conditions for crimes committed on political grounds<sup>72</sup>.

In Rwanda unlike in South Africa where amnesty was granted to perpetrators, the 'Gacaca tribunal' where been set or establish in villages to sentence or punish perpetrators, accomplices and conspirators. The Good Friday agreement of 1998 was equally reached in Northern Ireland to end decades of conflict between communities. Reaching a sound reconciliation requires a sound and genuine negotiation including all parties and borrowing from the Habermasian views, it should be held in a public sphere which to him is a ground for communicative exchange as equal parties. That is, as per the assertion below

The public sphere is that realm of social life within which "something approaching public opinion can be formed". A public sphere comes into existence when citizens communicate, either face to face or through letters, journals and newspapers and other mass media, in order to express their opinions about matters of general interest, and to subject these opinions to rational discussion. Access to the public sphere should be open to all and within the sphere all are treated as equals<sup>73</sup>

The above view will equally justify the reason by which Girardin stood by to recommends values by equally digging deep on the parameters to which must be included for a successful and fruitful reconciliation that is, in his words, he states that;

Inclusive social reconciliation demands consistency between legal proceedings, support for victims and healing of trauma, and truth about violence, regardless of who committed it. This requires a sound and balanced mix of values: justice as fairness, and cardinal values such as equity, responsibility, sustainability and solidarity, peace and security, unity and diversity<sup>74</sup>.

From the above, it is clear to say that, we reconcile to forget our differences and equally to attain a society free from revenge encouraging bilateral relations among states and nations, since wars have led to a vast production of weapons of mass destruction, detrimental to both man and his environment. It's with no doubt to say that, the politics of reconciliation has been considered as another way of sustainability that is, in order to see our societies live healthily and uprightly. Since there is a greater link between reconciliation and sustainability which does not only call on men to reconcile among them or between them and the society, as was the case with John Rawls but going beyond to reconcile too with nature by applying in the words of Girardin what is referred to as "environmental justice."<sup>75</sup> This will therefore, necessitate or enables us to live in harmony with nature in a reciprocal manner so as to make it possible in securing our common interest. Reconciliation therefore does not require knowing who shot first but acknowledging we were both wrong in our actions. This same logic implies that, there is no more time pointing fingers on who has contributed more or less on environmental degradation but reconciling our actions and accepting that we have all been harsh in our actions. The Anglican arch Bishop Desmond Tutu was fast to held that holding groggiest with one steals that precious peace of the mind which as clearly stated by him,

We are bound up in a delicate network of interdependence because, as we say in our African idiom, a person is a person through other persons. To dehumanize another inexorably means that one is dehumanized as well... Thus to forgive is indeed the best form of self-interest since anger, resentment, and revenge are corrosive of that *summum bonum*, that greatest good, communal harmony that enhances... humanity and personhood of all in the community<sup>76</sup>.

The above assertion then encourages us to be able to think, listen and talk with each other in the face of anger so as to reach and do away with our differences, "rely[ing] on a mix of political tenacity, confidence-building mechanisms, the presence of renowned leaders in civil society, social acceptance of the risks of peace... and above all credible institutional mechanisms."<sup>77</sup> Which will explains why peace is considered a panacea for both the human

<sup>69</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 13.

<sup>70</sup> Salzgeber, J., *The Little Book of Stoicism: Timeless Wisdom to Gain Resilience, Confidence and Calmness*, P. 224.

<sup>71</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 145.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Habermas, cited by Edgar, A, in, *The Philosophy of Habermas*, Chesham, Acumen Publishing Limited, 2005, P. 31.

<sup>74</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 146

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 18.

<sup>76</sup> Mpilo Tutu, D., *No Future Without Forgiveness*, New York, Doubleday, 1999, P. 31.

<sup>77</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 15.



soul and the society at large. Reconciliation to Girardin as was with Desmond Tutu again took a psychological stand according to which “Forgiv[ing] for Good [is] a Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness,... In [a] careful scientific studies, forgiveness training has been shown to reduce depression, increase hopefulness, decrease anger, improve spiritual connection, [and] increases emotional self-confidence.”<sup>78</sup> By this, Girardin therefore saw domestic conflicts as an enemy to humanity since it opposes neighbors, former friends and even relatives.<sup>79</sup> They breed violence, systematic mistrust, economic and social discrimination<sup>80</sup>.

Reaching a consensus is therefore the only way forward for a sustainable society which as Antoine Tine remarks, « le consensus s’appuie sur la possibilité de la réconciliation des points de vue. Il valorise l’idée que les acteurs de l’argumentation peuvent s’entendre parce qu’ils parlent le même langage et partagent une commune humanité.»<sup>81</sup> This is to say speaking in the words of Girardin, “The bad guy [or neighbour] is not a foreigner. Violence leads to more violence.”<sup>82</sup> Justice should also accommodate some parts of magnanimity. A tit-for-tat politics driven by revenge does not lead to a sound and sustainable developments.<sup>83</sup>

### 2.3. Democracy/Justice as Fairness, Policy Network/Resource Management

Democratic societies promulgate the view that, the ethical dimension of governance has to do with effectiveness and accountability, and the philosophy of delegation pays tribute to limitation of power.<sup>84</sup> Through a fair policy adoption, which leads to stability and progress, maintaining the fairness of justice in issues of economic, healthcare, housing, social, political and ecological, requiring that, we are consistent in every action taken. This is paramount in giving both the present and future a path to durability and more especially as environmental issues are concerned. Explaining why Plato an ancient thinker, “connects environmental sustainability to social justice and political stability in the first two books of the Republic. [That is], he addresses elements that are central to environmental sustainability that are tightly integrated to social justice and political stability.”<sup>85</sup> This is to say with him, in socially-just societies, human rights are respected and discrimination is not allowed to flourish. In this line, Benoit Girardin being an advocate of sustainable ideas, clinch and cuddle on the fullness of justice by following the footsteps of John Rawls in considering justice as a fair system as well as the trunk of the Ethical Tree in which enables reciprocity. This could be traced and identify in his assertion which goes thus that:

In the last third of the twentieth century, fresh and radical thinking sought a solid foundation on which societies might find a way of living together. Ethics and justice played a central role in this rethinking. A prominent leader of the revival, John Rawls, defines justice as fairness in his major works, *A Theory of Justice* (1971) and *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (2001). He proposes a thought experiment in which people select principles to determine the basic structure of their society, but from behind a veil of ignorance that deprives them of information about their own particular characteristics and situation.<sup>86</sup>

As noted from the above point, it is necessary to eliminate all forms of social inequalities which social ecology, being a leading movement had maintained in identifying and attributing the roots of our environmental challenges to the continuous inequality among men in the society, ignited by a relationship that promotes domination. In this optic, Girardin therefore makes us to understand that, “justice and sustainability will not be reached without settling the first tradeoff...”<sup>87</sup> that is to say with him “Justice as a whole is the reference, and fair is better than biased”.<sup>88</sup> Situating Girardin within the context of Rawls, and expanding our understanding of Rawls’ principle of fair equality of opportunity, preserving the range of choices available to future generations, to pursue their own conceptions of the good can help to define the obligations of current generations to future ones, and to provide an overarching principle from which rules and institutions can be derived and asserted.<sup>89</sup> This is in view of reaching an “overlapping consensus” on the importance of environmental protection among citizens with divergent views about the value of nature<sup>90</sup> and in the management of its natural resources while particularizing on water which is accorded a human right status pushing Girardin to reach a remark that

Water is essential for all life. It is a key element for a life with dignity and a condition of all human rights because without water, and food, no other rights can be implemented. Water is a critical common need for all human beings and all forms of life, including plants, animals, and the atmosphere<sup>91</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Fred Luskin, cited by Tutu, D and Mpho Tutu, in, *The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path For Healing Ourselves and our World*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, edited by Douglas C Abrams, Australia, Harpercollins Publishers, 2014, pp. 17-18.

<sup>79</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 14.

<sup>80</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>81</sup> Antoine Tine, « Jürgen Habermas: Entre Pluralisme et Consensus. La Réinvention De La Modernité ? », Un Article Publié Dans La Revue Ethiopiques. Revue Négro-Africaine De Littérature Et de Philosophie, No 64-65m 1er et 2e Trimestres 2000, P. 24.

<sup>82</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 14.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 64.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 99.

<sup>85</sup> Stone, M., *Plato, Environmental Sustainability, and Social Justice*, op.cit, P. 105.

<sup>86</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 32.

<sup>87</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 80.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 94.

<sup>89</sup> Gail E. Henderson, *Rawls and sustainable development*, McGill international journal of sustainable development law and policy, Vol.7, No.1, 2011, pp.1-31. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24352546>.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Girardin, B., *Water Ethics: Principles and Guidelines*, Geneva, globethics.net, 2019, P. 6.

Moreover, the International Development Law Organization, an intergovernmental organization which is devoted to empowering people and enabling governments to reform laws and strengthen institutions to promote peace, justice, sustainable development and economic opportunity points out that “The international community has embarked on an ambitious endeavor to establish a new development paradigm. Since the challenges are enormous. Poverty endures and inequality grows. Discrimination and denial of rights persist. Conflict and civil strife engulf nations with renewed vengeance”<sup>92</sup> Benoit Girardin on his part curious on the way forward, in reaching a Compromised balance through interaction, thinks an equitable and sustainable, balancing advantages and risks, costs and benefits, as well as for each party, recommending feasibility and accountability should equally enjoy priority<sup>93</sup>, with Justice remaining a watch dog in prioritizing accountability and efficiency, in the heart of ethical politics and policies. By embracing its various meanings, among which includes considering:

- Equity, equal access to resources, information, influence or equal capabilities
- Fair distribution of common and public wealth, assets, services etc.
- Same rules for everybody, impartiality
- Fair proportion between the gravity of crimes and their punishment
- Compliance with laws<sup>94</sup>.

As earlier mentioned, the ethical dimension, are a prerequisites to maintaining and taking in to account a fair management of resources valuable to maintaining societal cohesion. Thereby enabling that, all plants that grow in the earth, and also all animals that grow upon it, have periods of fruitfulness and barrenness of both soul and body as often as the revolutions complete the circumferences of their circles. These circumferences are short for the short-lived and the opposite for their opposites.<sup>95</sup>

It's therefore with no doubt to say that maintaining trustworthy institution founded on transparency are only attainable under democratic societies with function laws since “Democracy is better able than other systems to take into account the ethical requirement of politics. A functioning democracy is accountable and cannot but listen to citizen expectations”<sup>96</sup> Which John Rawls on the other hand was very much convinced that there is need for a democratic society, which will enable to secure the possibility of an over-lapping consensus on its fundamental political values, since on regime based on regular elections, incumbents try their best to show how promises made have been fulfilled and explain why external factors have hampered implementation, while opponents try to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the incumbent regime or their own prospects of doing better.<sup>97</sup>Enabling a competitive atmosphere by helping citizens to position themselves on political issues, organize pressure and influencing political decisions.<sup>98</sup> Which Nnaemeka Agashi points out that “good leadership involves training of capacity building and stringent standards of integrity and ethical behavior.”<sup>99</sup> Girardin, will later on structure that, good governance necessitate the services of “a good leader who respects the fundamental basic rule of life.”<sup>100</sup> Accountability at all levels and by every player is therefore a must, and not a matter of choice<sup>101</sup> for;

Accountability is a fundamental value for any political system. Citizens should have the right to know what actions have been taken in their name, and they should have the means to force corrective actions when government acts in an illegal, immoral, or unjust manner. Individual citizens should have the ability to have some redress when their rights are abused by government or they do not receive the public benefits to which they are entitled.<sup>102</sup>

This therefore means that, a well-functioning public sector that delivers quality public services, consistent with citizen preferences and fosters private market-led growth while managing fiscal resources prudently is considered critical to the World Bank's mission of poverty alleviation and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which is seen as promoting humanity's well-being.<sup>103</sup> On the United Nations agenda 2030, as highlighted by UNESCO, emphases are placed on the role of support to policy and normative work for the achievement of the agenda.<sup>104</sup> That is, policy definition is paramount and like maintaining an engine which if well maintained or defined, enables a smooth and sustainable progress. For this reason, it necessitates taking precautions, for wrong prescription puts a society in to a standstill. Girardin therefore calls on our attention that “Politics is the realm of uncertainty. Political decisions and policies may result in unexpected or adverse consequences. Leaders are expected. To think through the full implications of what they decide as well as how they handle the unexpected.”<sup>105</sup>

<sup>92</sup>IDLO, *Doing Justice To Sustainable Development: Integrating the Rule of Law In to the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, Rome, June 2014, P. 3

<sup>93</sup> Girardin. B, 2012, P. 94.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, P. 64.

<sup>95</sup> Cooper, J. M, *Plato Complete Works*, edited with introduction and notes, P. 1189.

<sup>96</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 159.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 102.

<sup>99</sup> Nnaemeka Agashi, P.G., *Awolowo's Political Philosophy: A Panacea For Good Governance*, P. 141.

<sup>100</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, P. 141.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 71.

<sup>102</sup> Anwar Shah, *Public Sector Governance and Accountability Series: Performance Accountability and Combating Corruption*, Washington, D.C, The world bank, 2007, P. 15.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, P. ii.

<sup>104</sup> UNESCO, *Moving Forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, P. 3.

<sup>105</sup> Girardin, B., *Ethics in Politics*, pp. 51-52.

Moreover, “ethics in politics considers economics and in particular economic limitations and resources as essential reference points for any political priority claiming to be realistic. It seeks also to highlight sound choices related to economic policy and establish true costs.”<sup>106</sup> Which “Experience shows that, many laws are better accepted if civil society organisations (social associations, professional organizations, trade unions, political and religious movements, etc.) have been involved in a consultative process and their views and practices taken into account.”<sup>107</sup>

### 3. MOVING BEYOND GIRARDIN: ENVIRONMENTAL PEDAGOGY, ENFORCING CONVICTION TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTALISM

It's with no doubt to say that, for the Earth's natural heritage to be maintained, and for the future generation, to thrive spiritually, culturally and economically, we have a duty to conserve the Earth's living heritage, and our global biodiversity, since climatic changes demonstrates yet an irreversibility of major development such as the melting of the ice-caps which requires an urgent and common decision implementation, by enabling a harmoniously human society adaptable to nature, which like Pierre Rabhi, one of the leaders of the Algerian movement for the restoration and treatment of nature as a vital part of man, affirms “that embracing and implementing a new way of being in the world has become an absolute necessity if we are to save the imperiled planet and ourselves in the process”.<sup>108</sup>In this regard, we therefore see in environmental pedagogy the ability to help stimulate and enforce individuals' consciousness, to bear in mind the fact that, all that matters must not always be interest, and more especially the ideology behind the network of polluters, that has penetrated global economy and eco-climatic policies, “whose gangster activities and advocacy is backed by the zeal for profit, in which the ozone depletion reality to them is an invention to impede their businesses”.<sup>109</sup>

#### 3.1. *Environmental Pedagogy: The Way Forward for Human Flourishing?*

Talking from a perspective of an environmental pedagogy will enable stimulate our understand about nature as a living being, as already raised by James Lovelock and others, that is capable and reacts according to how we treats it. In this parameter, the formulation of a pedagogy which emulates an ecobio-communitarianism as displays by Godfrey B. Tangwa will be required to maintain a relationship with nature from an African perspective that will help bypass the neoliberal forces and their narrative about nature. In return, it will enable us to observe, respect and protects the environment, for the attainment of environmental justice, as was the wish with Benoit Girardin.

Moreover, for this environmental pedagogy to be effective in delivering our objective, its foundation should begin from elementary level till the university. In this way, Sensitization on the dangers of interest and unfriendly exploitations, which has led to a disruptive relations and an increase in Greenhouse gases will be discouraged at the early age, by re-enforcing an ecological consciousness, orientated towards environmental ethics. Since we cannot be talking of peaceful and stable societies embracing democratic principles, but forgetting it could only be built on stable environment, sustaining fair treatment. In this line, Godfrey Tangwa, choses to base his conception of environmental ethics on an African orientation in ascribing to it, a metaphysical outlook dating back to the pre-colonial traditional African societies. This metaphysical worldview to him involves the “recognition and acceptance of inter-dependence and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans”<sup>110</sup> this ecobio-communitarian stand point equally harbours diversity, which regards the ways, manners and the cosmically relations between man and his fellows. This will equally explains why traditional Africans societies were more conscious in their attitude towards plants, animal and inanimate things and the various invisible forces of the world, which as noted by the Cameroonian bio-ethician taking reference from his own proper society notes that,

The Nso attitude toward nature and the rest of creation is that of respectful coexistence, conciliation, and containment, there are frequent offerings of sacrifices to God, to the divine spirits, both benevolent and malevolent, to the departed ancestors and to the sundry invisible and inscrutable forces of nature<sup>111</sup>

The above assertion shows how compassionate an African mind is towards nature. That is, a heart which is constantly on fire for the whole of creation, for humanity, birds, and animals and for all that exists. Time has proven that we need to fully or partially go back to enforce these ancient practices which the capitalist forces have almost wiped out. We need to strengthen this practice through a progressive based approach, appeasing nature at all cost, since we cannot be talking about the future generation while ourselves are not even sure of withstand the storm we equally find ourselves in. We therefore need to go beyond the western environmental ideologists which are solemnly composed of anthropocentric tendencies. Since this western prospect remains challenging and thus, life threatening. Only reshaping the human mind through a competent pedagogy adaptive to the African way remains the only guarantor to humanity's existence and well-being on earth. Similarly, Ojomo P. A in an article likewise Godfrey Tangwa develop and bases his thoughts on what Segun Ogungbemi terms “ethics of nature-relatedness,” which seeks and encourages “...human beings to seek to co-exist peacefully with nature and treat it with some reasonable concern for its worth, survival and sustainability”.<sup>112</sup> This human responsibility which is similar to those

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 158.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 49.

<sup>108</sup> Ezekiel Kikoh, *Eco-climatic crisis: The survival of African approaches and the paradox of polluters' pay*, American Journal of Climatic Studies, Vol.3, Issue 1, pp 1 - 14, 2022, P. 12.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 8.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 11

<sup>111</sup> Godfrey B. Tangwa, *Some African Reflections on Biomedical and Environmental Ethics* in, Kwasi Wiredu, *A Companion to African Philosophy*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2004, P. 390.

<sup>112</sup> Ojomo P.A “*Environmzntal Ethics: An African Understanding*”, in *African Journal of Environmental Science and Technology*, Lagos, 2011, P. 575.

of ancient Greek as portrayed in Ovid's *Metamorphose*, which gives a vivid and a more sophisticated account of tales that had appeared in various forms in ancient civilizations. In his famous tale of *Apollo and Daphne*, in which Daphne is changed to a laurel tree, is typical some of these stories and as Philpot puts,

The story is one of the many folk-tales concerning the conversion of mortals into trees which Ovid has so gracefully elaborated in his *Metamorphoses*, and which assumes a new importance now that we can trace them back into that old world when tree and man and indeed all living things were held to be so near akin...<sup>113</sup>

This shows that the Greek and Roman myths portrays a close relations humans had with nature, which is then a clear fact to indicate that, a belief existed that humans and non-humans were closely connected and as such, White Lynn in this lame light adds to our understanding that,

[...]In Antiquity every tree, every spring, every hill had its own genius loci, the guardian spirit. These spirits were accessible to men, but were very unlike men; centaurs, fauns and mermaids show their ambivalence. Before one cut a tree, mined a mountain or dammed a brook, it was important to placate the spirit in charge of that particular situation and to keep it placated [...]<sup>114</sup>

From the above, it is then certain for us to say that the ancient relation of man with his natural environment could be term a form of religious animism, since "Rivers had gods, springs had nymphs called naiads, and lakes had limniads. There were oreads for mountains, napaeae for valleys, and leimoniads for meadows"<sup>115</sup>. We should therefore talk and emphasize on sustainable development when we are able to emulate and put to practice these ancient and more importantly the African oriented relations through a competent and oriented environmental pedagogy.

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## CONCLUSION

Our reflection in this paper was to examine the policies of sustainable development according to Benoit Girardin, which in an attempt to do so, permitted our understanding on politics as an essential human activity essential in building societies and communities by basing on rules, laws and a balance of conflicting interest, necessitating sustainable development as development meant to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meeting theirs. In this perspective individual consciousness/ conviction is paramount in maintaining accountability, efficiency and limitation by basing on justice as a fair system, promoted through democratic societies. Environmental justice is thus, maintaining a relationship apt with natural recommendation showing that, man has a sole responsibility to act in a way that conforms to nature. Since the preservation of our environment requires that we act according to ways that promotes natural harmony. Thereby equally embracing cohabitation among individuals in an equal manner since social ecologist attributes the promotion of inequality among men as the prime cause of our current environmental problems. This claim pushes us to understand why Plato had long attributed environmental justice to social justice. But haven realized Girardin's guest for sustainable development are rooted on liberal and neo-liberal traditions, according to which is backed by the zeal for profit, indirectly/ directly encourages unsustainable exploitation of the planet's resources using unfriendly environment technology pursuing threat to humanity. We then saw the need for a sustained environmental pedagogy, whose formulation should emulate an African perspective of ecobio-communitarianism. This is because it recognizes and accepts the interdependence and peaceful coexistence between earth, plants, animals and humans in this reason, it will go a long way to enforcing sustainable development by going beyond this liberal and neo-liberal ideologies about nature, thereby stimulating individuals consciousness, as well as ecological consciousness, to better construct a more effective and sustainable societies beginning from our local through the national and then from a global position. This pedagogy is as well a process whose foundation should begin from elementary level till the university. In this way, Sensitization on the dangers of interest and unfriendly exploitations, which has led to a disruptive relations and an increase in Greenhouse gases will be discouraged at the early age, by re-enforcing an ecological consciousness, orientated towards environmental ethics.

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<sup>114</sup> Lynn, W., 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', In Barbour, I.G, *Western Man and Environmental Ethics: Attitudes towards nature and technology*, USA, Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1973, P. 25.

<sup>115</sup> Hughes, J.D., *Pan's Travail: Environmental problems of the Ancient Greeks and Romans*, Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1996, P. 49.

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