

ADVOCATING FOR RESOURCE USE CAPPING

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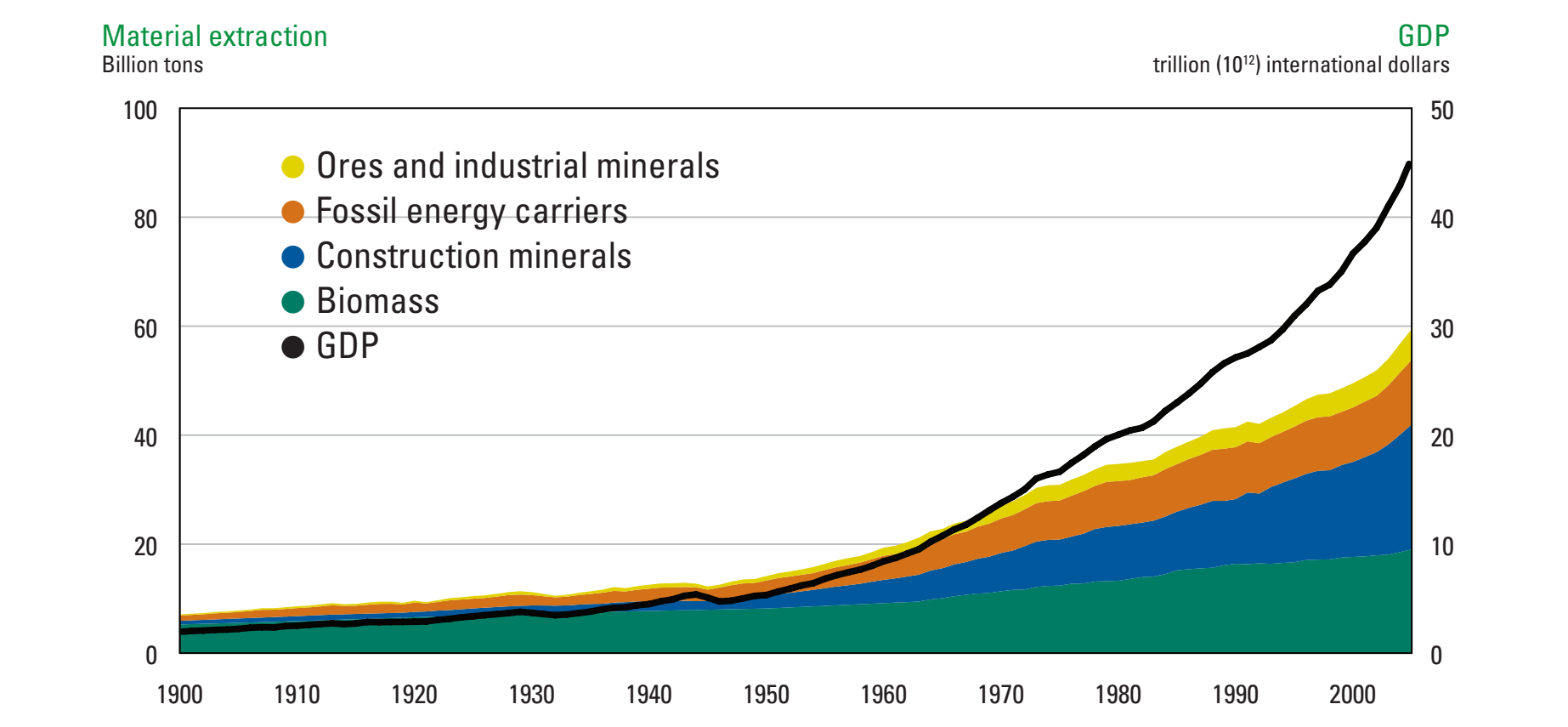
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THE PROBLEMS

Resource consumption surges despite increasing efficiency

Global resource consumption is soaring even despite of higher efficiency, with 34 times more material resources being extracted now than one hundred years ago.

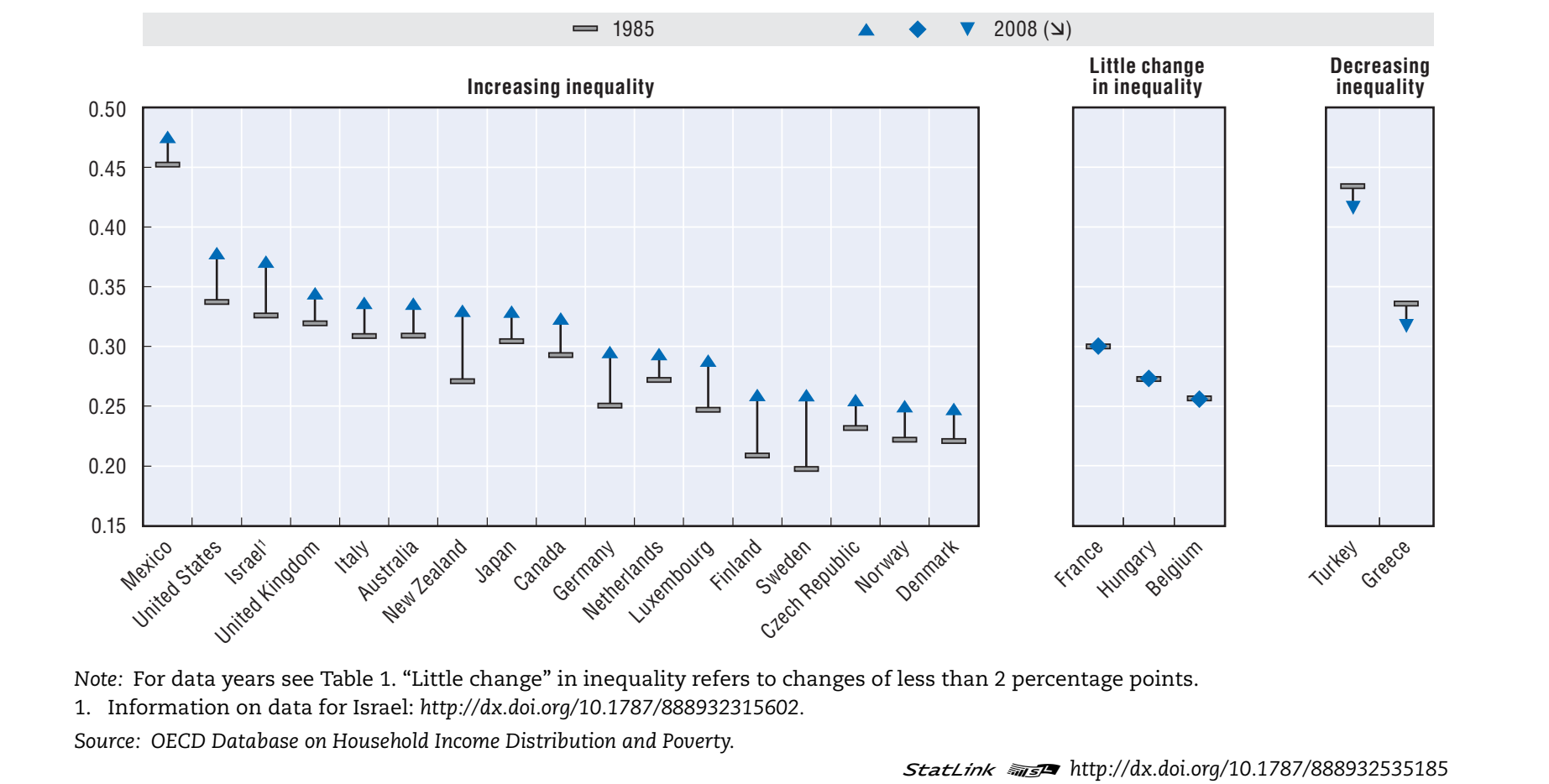
Increase in global material extraction in billion tons, 1900-2005¹



Social inequalities are increasing

Economic growth in industrialized countries, fuelled by the increasing resource extraction, did not eliminate social inequalities, hunger or poverty. Today we face growing global competition over resources and rising prices, which tend to hurt the poorest, both globally and within nations.

Income inequality increased in most OECD countries (Gini coefficients of income inequality, mid-1980s and late 2000s)²



Stressed ecosystems provide less services

The process of extraction itself, and related production of waste, place growing pressure on the Earth's ecosystems. In turn, ecosystems are less able to provide us services that underpin our well-being.

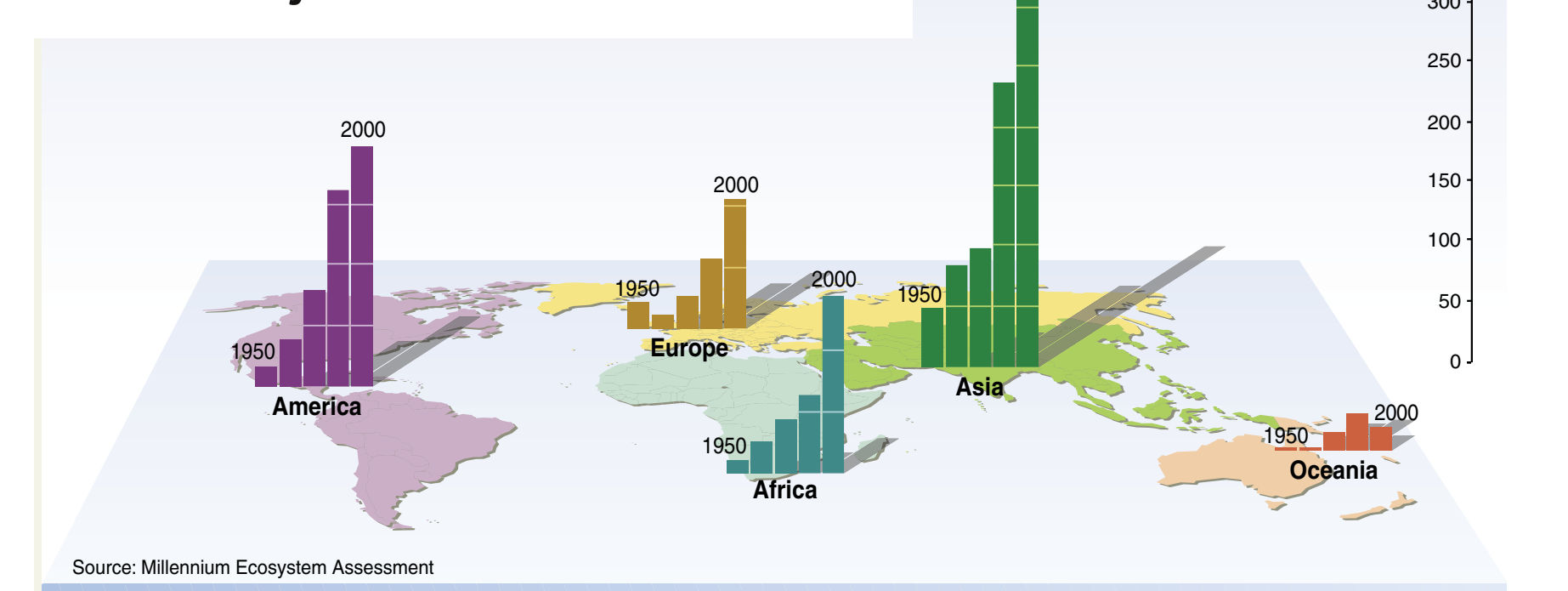
Many ecosystem services are degraded (trends around the year 2000)³

Provisioning services		Status
Food	crops	↑
	livestock	↑
	capture fisheries	↓
	aquaculture	↑
	wild foods	↓
Fiber	timber	+/-
	cotton, silk	+/-
	wood fuel	↓
Genetic resources		↓
Biochemicals, medicines		↓
Fresh water		↓

Regulating Services		Status
Air quality regulation		↓
Climate regulation – global		↓
Climate regulation regional/local		↓
Water regulation		+/-
Erosion regulation		↓
Water purification, waste treatment		↓
Disease regulation		+/-
Pest regulation		↓
Pollination		↓
Natural hazard regulation		↓
Cultural Services		Status
Spiritual and religious values		↓
Aesthetic values		↓
Recreation and ecotourism		+/-

One example of ecosystem services that has many impacts on human well-being is flood protection. The capacity of ecosystems to buffer from extreme events has been reduced through loss of wetlands, forests, and mangroves. In addition, people increasingly occupy regions exposed to extreme events.

Number of flood events increased dramatically on all continents since 1950⁴



Tool I: Non-renewable Energy Quota System

The proposed scheme (Iván Gyulai, 2010) aims to set a cap on non-renewable energy use based on present use rates. The cap would be lowered progressively year by year.

- Energy use entitlements are allocated among individual consumers (on an equal per capita basis), and sectors. Savings can be sold for interest free "entitlement money", which can be spent in an environmentally and socially certified market.
- A revolving fund helps to finance investments in energy efficiency and renewables through interest free loans in entitlement money, with a payback period adjusted to the energy savings in income generation realized through the investment. This makes such investments accessible to everybody, including the poor.
- An advisory service helps all stakeholders to change their behaviour and adapt to the new scheme.

Tool II: Tradable Energy Quotas (TEQs)

TEQs is an electronic system to guarantee that a nation meets its emissions reduction targets, ensure fair access to energy for all, support the active participation and cooperation of citizens and all other energy users in rapidly reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.

The scheme is implemented by capping the fuel and electricity consumption of the national economy, and optimizing the energy use available under the cap.

Tool III: The Rimini Protocol on Oil Depletion

This protocol proposes to limit the national rate of extraction and consumption to the current national and global depletion rate respectively, depending on whether a particular country is an oil importer or exporter.

The protocol restricts oil flows in order to assure that it is available longer, and thus allows time for transition to a post-oil society.

TOOLS FOR AN OVERARCHING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK THAT MAY SOLVE THE PROBLEMS

CURRENT SOLUTIONS ARE INSUFFICIENT

Current policies fail to address the problems

Policy efforts addressing resource use only focus on achieving higher efficiency. However, economic growth will relentlessly outstrip efficiency gains, meaning a total rise in resource use and a failure to address scarcity and the accompanying social and environmental problems.

THE PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

We need to set a cap on the use of resources including all types of raw materials if we want to effectively lower their consumption and re-adjust our economy within sustainable ecological boundaries.

Defining general principles for the determination of caps is difficult, as resources are very different. Some are renewable, while some are limited. Some stocks decrease fast, while others are relatively abundant. One resource can be scarce in some areas, while there are no major constraints on the amount of its extraction in other parts of the world. Some resources are present almost everywhere, while others (like fossil fuels) are concentrated in some countries. However, the complexity of the access and distribution of natural resources should not stop us from taking urgent and significant action.

The Resource Cap Coalition proposes the use of three tools: Non-renewable Energy Quota System, Tradable Energy Quotas (TEQs), and the Rimini Protocol on Oil Depletion. These tools for overarching regulatory framework are summarised in the boxes above.

Sources:

¹ UNEP (2011) Decoupling natural resource use and environmental impacts from economic growth, A Report of the Working Group on Decoupling to the International Resource Panel. www.unep.org/resourcepanel/Portals/24102/PDFs/DecouplingENGSummary.pdf

² An Overview of Growing Income Inequalities in OECD Countries: Main Findings. Divided We Stand Why Inequality Keeps Rising © OECD 2011. www.oecd.org/els/social/inequality

³ Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis. www.millenniumassessment.org/documents/document.356.aspx.pdf

⁴ Capping resource use. Proposal for a reduction of non-renewable energy use within the EU. www.ceeweb.org/rcc

The resource cap should be guided by the following principles:

- aims to realise an absolute reduction in resource use,
- is progressively lowered year after year,
- is based on an interdisciplinary analysis including sound scientific information and a social debate applying bottom-up approaches as far as possible,
- is defined through clear indicators and transparency of information,
- is underpinned by clear rules and strong public support, monitoring and enforcement,
- transforms the production and consumption patterns in favour of products and services with low input,
- contributes to the re-localization of the economy with shorter economic cycles, higher self-sufficiency, higher adaptation to local availability of resources and less transport needs,
- fully considers environmental justice and ecological debt (from the North to the South) caused by centuries of social and economic exploitation,
- takes into account the social concerns so that the poor, vulnerable and marginalized benefit from it,
- better balances the share of human and machine labour,
- is accompanied by complementary measures (effective regulation of pollution and land use, taxation, basic access warranties, etc.),
- does not allow any financial speculation within the new structure of resource scarcity.

QUOTE: JOIN US IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE POLICY OPTIONS

"The RCC has been engaged in finding solutions for the sustainable and fair management of scarce natural resources. To become meaningful, a truly gigantic improvement of resource productivity has to be aimed at. Also the question of lifestyles will have to be addressed, because in the past essentially all efficiency gains have been gobbled up by additional consumption, which is the so-called Jevons' Paradox.

I am glad to see that the partners of this platform are dedicated to develop innovative policy options, aiming both at ecological sustainability and a fair distribution between North and South in terms of the treasures of nature."⁵

Dr. Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker
Co-Chair of UNEP's International Resource Panel, Co-President of The Club of Rome

JOIN OUR GROWING COALITION

Help us make the world a better place to live:

- Advocate for absolute resource use reduction considering social justice
- Provide scientific evidence to support our approach
- Contribute to our advocacy and scientific events with your expertise
- Be a partner of our coalition, subscribe to our mailing list
- Use your political leverage to spread our messages



The Resource Cap Coalition brings together over 40 organisations from four continents (America, Africa, Asia, Europe) advocating for a global resource use reduction that contributes to social justice. The coalition is coordinated by CEEweb for Biodiversity.

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