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EVENT

Dinner Dialogue
Sustainability

Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble



The Washington Post called Lester Brown "one of the world's most influential thinkers." The Telegraph of Calcutta refers to him as "the guru of the environmental movement." While visiting Germany in order to launch the German edition of his book "Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble", he gave a talk in Berlin on 22 January 2007.

Lester Brown started his career as a farmer, growing tomatoes in southern New Jersey with his younger brother during high school and college. In 1974 he founded the [Worldwatch Institute](#) [1] and became its President. In 2001 he founded the [Earth Policy Institute](#) [2] to provide a vision and a road map for achieving an environmentally sustainable economy. With more than 50 books (some of them translated in more than 40 languages), he is one of the world's most widely published authors. He is one of the global thinkers who links analyses with proposals for concrete action. He is the recipient of many prizes and awards, including 23 honorary degrees, a MacArthur Fellowship, the 1987 United Nations' Environment Prize, the 1989 World Wide Fund for Nature Gold Medal, and the 1994 Blue Planet Prize for his "exceptional contributions to solving global environmental problems."

Lester Brown began his talk by sketching the environmental problems that are expected to arise if China takes on the western way of life. Although this challenge is widely recognised and the realisation that action needs to be taken is growing, the actions taken thus far have not succeeded in reversing the deterioration of the economy's environmental support systems. Against the background of China's expected development, the urgency to take action gains new importance. Forests continue to shrink, deserts are expanding, water tables are falling, fisheries are collapsing, temperatures are rising, ice is melting, and sea level is rising. The existing fossil-fuel-based, automobile-centred, throwaway economy

simply will not sustain economic progress. The challenge now is to restructure the global economy, shifting from the old economy to a new one that internalises environmental costs, is powered largely by renewable sources of energy, has a much more diversified transport system, and that reuses and recycles everything. We can already see glimpses of the new economy beginning to emerge in places around the world and we currently have the most important technologies and instruments to solve the problems at hand. The question, however is, whether we will take action in time.

During the subsequent discussion, the following issues were raised:

- The participants agreed that the question is not whether man-kind acts in response to the environmental challenges but when and how.
- Which role can market forces and public opinion play in order to act faster?
- What triggers political changes of the necessary dimension? What kind of government do we need?
- How can attitudes and lifestyles be changed?
- How can alternative energies be fostered and where are their limits?
- What relates democratisation, equity and environmental protection?

Further Link:

[Bio Lester Brown](#) [3] [pdf,37 KB, English]

Sponsors:



[United States Diplomatic Mission to Germany](#) [4]



[German Council for Sustainable Development](#) [5]

22 January 2007

Berlin

Lester Brown

Speaker

Lester Brown

Date

22 January 2007

Location

Berlin, Germany

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Links

[1] <http://www.worldwatch.org/>

[2] <http://www.earth-policy.org/>

[3] https://www.ecologic.eu/download/dinner_dialogue/2007/lester_brown_bio.pdf

[4] <https://de.usembassy.gov/>

[5] <http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/english.html>