

The Pax Natura Foundation  
“Global Justice and the Environment”

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While wars over the centuries among nations have ravaged the human population, an undeclared war has also been raging against the natural world. This conflict, according to the Pax Natura Foundation, while complex and difficult to define, in many ways now appears to constitute a potentially far more serious threat to the long-term survival of life on Earth as we know it. Reports of mass destruction continue coming from ecologists, biologists, meteorologists, and concerned individuals from many disciplines. On the front lines of this conflict are the decline of clean air and water, the relentless restructuring of the atmosphere and climate, the clearing of the rainforests, the destruction of the coral reefs, the random re-structure of natural gene pools, and a host of other violent acts against nature.

The Pax Natura Foundation promotes “peace with nature” by empowering local communities to preserve the environment while stimulating local economic growth. Pax Natura achieves this by directing capital from industrialized nations to developing nations in an effort to promote sustainable development by rewarding good stewardship of tropical rain forest lands. The Foundation espouses a new bill of rights for the environment by acknowledging the sovereignty of natural law governing living systems and our direct dependence upon these systems. Rather than building walls for conservation at the expense of the poor in the developing world, the Foundation rewards indigenous peoples and local communities for the protection of natural systems so important to the preservation of life.

Ecology suggests that human rights are predicated upon the rights of all living systems and until such recognition is institutionalized in human awareness, the survival of species diversity, including the human, will remain in doubt. Pax Natura holds that the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is not an ideal in the abstract. Fairness, as a definition of global justice, presupposes sustainability. The rights of future generations to water, food and shelter, if compromised by the present generation’s destruction of these living systems, constitute an infringement and violation of basic human rights. But above and beyond the rights of human beings, the rights of all species, foundational to life itself, must be brought into the debate.

The collective congruency and history of public life within the human family is inadequate as a model for any comprehensive theory of global justice. Climate change and mass

species extinction demand a reassessment of this notion. The ecological crisis shows that global justice or fairness cannot be limited to political and cultural boundaries between peoples and nations. There are no boundaries in the natural world. The Pax Natura example thus suggests that global environmental justice is the new universal and philosophical moral imperative.

Sustainability, as a derivative of global environmental justice, has little to do with the natural resource asset base of the planet preserved for future generations. Sustainability is the goal of development expressed within and through natural laws. Natural law is the system of nature, the universal law of causality. Pax Natura argues that human conduct in the pursuit of any type of sustainability only becomes possible when derived from the intrinsic rationality of the universe as a whole and not in opposition to it. What is called the “green” development revolution, supported by Pax Natura, is a manifestation of this principle.

The debate on holism versus reductionism in modern physical theory is illustrative of the challenges facing this new theory of justice. The discovery of ecology suggests that the system of nature is non-reductive and that part and whole are mutually inclusive in the natural world. The wolf in Yellowstone, the flying bats in American Samoa, the honeybee or ubiquitous leaf-cutter ants in the tropics, each play pivotal roles in the web of life according to biologists. The Pax Natura theory of global justice tacitly recognizes the tapestry of this existence and the inherent rights and necessity of every stitch in its making and continuation. Peace with nature is thus an ideal founded upon the growing scientific consensus of the interdependence of all living systems.

Applying this theory of justice to perhaps one of the most challenging issues of our time, Pax Natura, in conjunction with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), recognizes and has quantified the environmental services that standing tropical forests provide to the planet in regulating greenhouse-gas emissions, the principle driver of climate change. As deforestation primarily in the tropics accounts for nearly twenty percent of all global-warming emissions, stopping their destruction is essential to prevent further rising temperatures. By rewarding small to medium size land-owners in tropical countries for the environmental services their forests provide to the planet as a whole, Pax Natura is acknowledging our mutual interdependence and demonstrating a new level of international

cooperation in solving this challenge. Peace with nature, as this model suggests, is now an imperative to insure not only our own survival but the survival of countless life forms on planet Earth.

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### **See also**

World Bank (Bio-Carbon Fund); Bio-diversity; Basic Rights; Crimes Against Peace; Development Ethics; Environmental Justice; Environmental Sustainability; Ethical Foreign Policy; Global Citizenship; Indigenous Peoples; International Justice

### **Further Readings**

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