

State of the World 2010: Transforming Cultures from Consumerism to Sustainability

Worldwatch Institute

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Many of the environmental and social problems we face today are symptoms of a deeper systemic failing: a dominant cultural paradigm that encourages living in ways that are often directly counter to the realities of a finite planet. This paradigm, typically referred to as 'consumerism,' has already spread to cultures around the world and has led to consumption levels that are vastly unsustainable. If this pattern spreads further there will be little possibility of solving climate change or other environmental problems that are poised to dramatically disrupt human civilization. It will take a sustained, long-term effort to redirect the traditions, social movements and institutions that shape consumer cultures towards becoming cultures of sustainability. These institutions include schools, the media, businesses and governments. Bringing about a cultural shift that makes living sustainably as 'natural' as a consumer lifestyle is today will not only address urgent crises like climate change, it could also tackle other symptoms like extreme income inequity, obesity and social isolation that are not typically seen as environmental problems. State of the World 2010 paints a picture of what this sustainability culture could look like, and how we can - and already are - making the shift.

'The most authoritative guide to the state of the planet.' The Guardian 'The environmentalist's bible' Times Higher Education 'This is the definitive guide to culture and sustainability If you're involved in transforming our world for the better, it is essential reading!' Tim Jackson, author of Prosperity Without Growth 'Essential reading' The Good Book Guide 'If we continue to think of ourselves mostly as consumers, it's going to be very hard to bring our environmental troubles under control. But it's also going to be very hard to live the rounded and joyful lives that could be ours. This is a subversive volume in all the best ways!' Bill McKibben, author of Deep Economy and The End of Nature 'Worldwatch has taken on an ambitious agenda in this volume. No generation in history has achieved a cultural transformation as sweeping as the one called for here it is hard not to be impressed with the book's boldness.' Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank 'This year's State of the World report is a cultural mindbomb exploding with devastating force. I hope it wakes a few people up.' Kalle Lasn, Editor of Adbusters magazine About the Author The Worldwatch Institute in Washington DC is one of the world's leading research centres for environmentally sustainable development.