

We live in a world where economic growth is valued over the health of people and the planet. Some of us are on a fast track to prosperity, but the fundamental problem is that we're heading in the wrong direction. If we want to reach a place where all life can thrive – not just the wealthy, or exclusively humanity even, but all life – then we drastically need to change direction and together embark on a new path.

While the emphasis on sustainability in the global political discourse is a welcome change, it is also important to consider what sustainability really means. In the context of human development, efficiency is all too often conflated with sustainability. We have already made significant efficiency improvements in energy, agriculture and manufacturing over the past several decades. Our efficient technology has enabled us to tap into such a vast amount of natural resources, we are outpacing the planet's ability to replenish those resources. In other words, we got here by being more and more efficient, so we can't now expect efficiency to save the day. It's time to go beyond the same old solutions, and create a new global culture where individual happiness and economic progress are less connected with making, selling and buying "stuff."

So my question is: are governments willing to align financial incentives with sustainable consumption and production using creative taxation policies, such as a luxury tax?