

## **Ethics of Development and Growth**

### **Brief Statement by Narendra P. Sharma, PhD**

If we truly care about the well-being of others, about the integrity of the environment, and about protecting the interests of future generations, then there are indeed important ethical considerations associated with development and growth at the local, national, and global levels.

Development and growth have been shaped over time by the tradeoffs and choices we have made through a social order dominated by capitalism and the market system, one that focuses on consumerism, materialism, exploitation of resources, profit maximization and short-term gains, and by our self-interests and wants.

Through our choices we have achieved significant growth and progress and we need to continue our efforts to grow and prosper. But growth has also been mired in income inequality and poverty, a widening gap between the haves and have-nots, exploitation of workers, and environmental degradation.

Since this situation is a result of our actions and inactions, we have a moral obligation and economic imperative to address these problems. We have the capacity to find solutions.

We must channel our collective actions to ensure that development and growth serve the “greater good” of people at the local and national levels, as well as the global community.

Furthermore, collective actions at the local, national, and global levels must reflect -- among other things-- human rights, social justice, and respect for the environment. Collective actions must reflect a clear vision and include a long-term perspective.

In the final analysis, it is good economics to work towards alleviating poverty and environmental degradation and creating a pathway for sustainable development that protects the environment and is more equitable. But this requires strong political will, consensus, action, and long-term commitment.

The above principles apply as we consider economic development and growth in Beaufort County, South Carolina.

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