

# Preface

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In a world of rapid globalization communities and countries face complex choices about how human endeavors and the capacities of nature relate. In this context values and ethics, the role of science and law, and the relationship of the global ecosystem to local conduct and choices converge. In recognition of this, during the Fifth Annual World Bank Conference on Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (ESSD5), entitled "Partnerships for Global Ecosystem Management: Science, Economics and Law," one plenary session considered the moral imperatives of global ecosystem management. However, because of the significant role of ethics and values in determining choices affecting environmental conditions, an additional one-day Associated Event was held to consider values, ethics, and ecosystem issues from a global perspective. This event, comprising Part One of this volume, engaged a distinguished and diverse group of people from the realms of academia, religion, nongovernmental organizations, foundations, science, and the World Bank.

The program was divided into five themes:

- Theme One—A Global Ethic: Reflections on the 21st Century
- Theme Two—Global Survival: A Convergence of Faith and Science?
- Theme Three—Global Patrimony and Local Justice
- Theme Four—Ethics and Biotechnology: Realities and Uncertainties

- Theme Five—Global Values: Requirements for a Humane Future.

The participants' deliberations posed as many questions as answers. For instance, in confronting global ecosystem management, is there one common value shared by all life, implicitly and explicitly, such as the right to survive? Are there commonly held values shared by all peoples? Can a shared set of values and ethics underpin global ecosystem management? Are the issues associated with global ecosystems influencing the ethical and value underpinnings of faith and science, or those of economics and law? How is science influencing the development of global environmental ethics and social values?

The presenters considered the historic influence of values and ethics in the development of societies. They highlighted the challenges for nations in responding to the assertions of global values: What are the precedents? Do ecosystem types serve as the shadow templates for the development and assertions of local social values and ethical systems, and if so, how can they be reconciled globally?

Presenters also reflected on the role of values and ethics in a world growing not only in economic interdependence but also in impoverishment and in degraded local and global ecosystems. They considered how science affirms belief systems in some realms, yet denies values and ethical constructs in other realms. They addressed the relationship of values and

ethics to justice: how values and ethics can shift a sense of nationhood, assert the rights of generations to come, and affirm the sovereign role of nature. Other presenters examined how the valuing of life locally, and the local consequences of global conditions, can deny justice.

Those attending considered the relationship between the requirements of belief systems and the realities of technologies. They heard about the promising realm of biotechnology but also about the complex and nuanced needs of nature. The importance of averting famine was familiar to all, but the threat of rogue applications of science and the role of ethics and cultural values generated concern. Is there the choice not to engage, and what is the price of nonengagement?

The goal of this event was to share the thinking of those who, while engaged in many of the great thematic debates of our time, are attuned to the evolution of values and ethics in their contributions to development. The presentations and discussions proved to be both thoughtful and informative. It is our hope that this volume

proves as informative to the reader as the forum was for us and that it will help to inform other explorations of ethics and values and support policies to implement environmentally and socially sustainable development.

Part Two of this volume comprises the proceedings of the Forum on Human Settlements, Human Solidarity, and Global Ecosystems: A Conversation, which followed the Ethics event as a Special Associated Event of the Fifth Annual ESSD Conference. The panelists spoke and then participated with the audience in a plenary conversation concerning the issues that link the requirements of human settlements, viable communities, and healthy and diverse ecosystems. This forum was sponsored by the Human Solidarity Foundation with a grant from the Jane and George Russell Company.

This volume was copyedited by Jane Whitten and Katrina van Duyn. It was desktopped by Wendy Guyette. Editing and production were coordinated by Alicia Hetzner and Virginia Hitchcock.

*Ismail Serageldin  
Joan Martin-Brown*