

# **A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift**

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## **Despite the White House Administration the U.S. is Moving Quickly Fighting Climate Change**

At the recent U.N. Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany (COP23), Syria agreed to the Paris Agreement of 2015, thus making the U.S. the only country not to sign the agreement. It is a real embarrassment that one of the true leaders in the world is not willing to comply with the climate change agreement endorsed by the rest of the world. Fortunately, the majority of the U.S. corporations, city and state government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and the American citizens realize that climate change is a problem and are doing something about it.

Although we read more about climate change than any of the other environmental issues, we are addressing the shortage of drinking water, the over-consuming of our natural resources, and the continuing rapid growth of the world population. One of the answers to all of these issues is environmental and social sustainability – how to meet the needs of today without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. An example of what can and is being done is making the supply chain sustainable. This refers to a company making sure that it not only operates in a sustainable manner, but all of its suppliers and service providers do the same.

A very large service component of the supply chain is logistics, the movement of the products from one supplier to another and eventually to the customer. So what are the major logistics companies doing to be more sustainable? UPS recently announced that it would add more compressed natural gas fueling stations. It is also going to add 390 new compressed natural gas tractors/terminal trucks as well as more liquefied natural gas vehicles to its alternative fuel and advanced technology fleet. As a result of using more natural gas for its ground fleet, in 2016, UPS decreased CO2 emissions by 100,000 metric tons.

Earlier this month, Tesla announced the electric semi-truck, a vehicle that will be in big demand by companies like FedEx, DHL and UPS. An electric vehicle will be in greater demand for inner-city deliveries which are generally short, allowing for recharging of the truck. It will be truly sustainable if the charging station is powered by renewable energy. In addition to being sustainable, the Tesla truck will not resemble a typical truck. It will have a long door that will hide the steps on the inside. The roof of the cabin will be tall enough for the driver or passengers to stand up. I mention these features anecdotally, not because they add anything to sustainability.

Another approach to sustainability is to minimize waste before it is created. Product orders can be handled digitally as they are leaner, help eliminate waste and minimize obsolescence. Inventory levels are thus set at optimum levels. Sustainable supply chain methods also include more efficient production processes by incorporating life cycle

analysis. More and more companies are adopting sustainable methodologies. These systems are going global with the introduction of the International Standard for Sustainable Procurement ISO20400 this year.

But it is not only in the supply chain. Even sport stadiums are becoming more sustainable. Mercedes-Benz Stadium, the home of the Atlanta Falcons football team, claims to be the most sustainable sports arena in the world. It uses 47% less water than a baseline and 60% less energy because of its LED lighting. It also has 4,000 solar panels on its roof which allows it to generate its own renewable energy. On top of that, it has charging stations that allow for the simultaneous charging of 48 electric vehicles. Consequently, it is the only sports stadium to have achieved a Platinum LEED Certification.

I can go on with more examples, but I just want to inform that we are moving quickly to protect the environment. Whether it is enough is another story. But fortunately, sustainability leaders are more attuned to the climate change issue and working toward a more sustainable world.