

The Earth Policy Reader

OTHER NORTON BOOKS
BY LESTER R. BROWN

*Eco-Economy: Building an
Economy for the Earth*

*State of the World 1984
through 2001*
annual, with others

Vital Signs 1992 through 2001
annual, with others

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with Gary Gardner
and Brian Halweil

The World Watch Reader 1998
editor with Ed Ayres

Tough Choices

Who Will Feed China?

Full House
with Hal Kane

The World Watch Reader 1991
editor

Saving the Planet
with Christopher Flavin
and Sandra Postel

Building a Sustainable Society

Running on Empty
with Colin Norman
and Christopher Flavin

The Twenty-Ninth Day

In the Human Interest

THE EARTH POLICY READER

Lester R. Brown
Janet Larsen
Bernie Fischlowitz-Roberts

Earth Policy Institute® is a nonprofit environmental research organization dedicated to providing a vision of an eco-economy and a roadmap on how to get from here to there. It seeks to reach a global constituency through its publications and the media. Its primary publications are *Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth*, *The Earth Policy Reader*, and a series of four-page Eco-Economy Updates that assess progress, or the lack thereof, in building an eco-economy. All of these can be downloaded at no charge from the EPI Web site.

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Lester R. Brown

PREFACE

The Earth Policy Institute, now just over a year old, is a new kind of research organization. It offers not only a vision of an environmentally sustainable economy—an eco-economy—but also frequent assessments of progress in realizing that vision. An early vision of an eco-economy was presented in *Eco-Economy: Building an Economy for the Earth*, published in November of 2001.

Since completing *Eco-Economy*, the Institute has released four-page Eco-Economy Updates every two weeks or so. These are included in Part 3 of this *Earth Policy Reader*.

One of Earth Policy's distinguishing features is its effort to reach a global constituency. To do this, it relies heavily on a worldwide network of publishers to translate and market its books. *Eco-Economy* is being published in 17 languages and 21 editions. The languages include Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, French, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Polish, Portuguese (in Brazil), Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, and Ukrainian. There are three English editions (US/Canada, UK/Commonwealth, and India), two Chinese editions (mainland China and Taiwan), and two Spanish editions (Spain and Latin America). Most of the publishers in this

network will also be publishing *The Earth Policy Reader*. (For information on the various language publications, please refer to our Web site, <www.earth-policy.org>.)

Earth Policy relies heavily on the communications media, both print and electronic, to disseminate its research results. These include, for example, the big three global electronic networks—the BBC, Voice of America, and CNN—and the major-language wire services, ranging from the German Press Agency to Xinhua in Chinese.

Each Eco-Economy Update is automatically distributed to our worldwide press e-mail and fax lists, totaling some 1,200 editors and reporters. One of the highlights of publishing *Eco-Economy* was the 14 excerpts published in magazines, including *The Ecologist*, *The Futurist*, *The Humanist*, *Mother Earth News*, and *Solar Today*. *Luup*, a Finnish news magazine, did a seven-page cover story on *Eco-Economy*.

Perhaps the most dynamic component of the Institute's outreach program is the dissemination of information via the Internet. The Updates are distributed on the Institute's own listserv, which now contains nearly 7,000 addresses, including both individuals and organizations. We are delighted that many of them now distribute the Updates on their own listservs.

In addition to news coverage of the Updates, many newspapers and magazines print them in their entirety. Among the newspapers that regularly carry the Updates are *Yomiuri* in Japan, which with a circulation of 10.2 million is the world's largest newspaper; *The Hindu* in India, a national English language newspaper; and *Hamshahri*, a leading Iranian newspaper. The Korean Federated Environmental Movement publishes them in its monthly magazine, *Hamngesaneungil*.

There are also more than a dozen electronic news networks and Web sites that regularly carry or cover the

Updates, such as the Environment News Service and the UN Foundation Newswire.

The enthusiasm with which the Updates have been received led us to compile them in this book. Part 3, entitled Eco-Economy Updates, contains some 20 Updates. Several others have been used in Part 2, in the Eco-Economy Indicators section, a collection of 12 trends to track in assessing progress in building an eco-economy.

Part 1 of the book looks at the ecological deficits that the world is now facing and at their effect on the food and energy economies. It begins with an in-depth examination of the effect of ecological deficits on China, which is now being invaded by advancing deserts. It contains some of our latest research findings, including those from my May 2002 field trip in China, which included Inner Mongolia and Gansu, two provinces directly affected by expanding deserts.

The Earth Policy presence in China has benefited greatly from the efforts of Lin Zixin. Mr. Lin worked closely with the International Technology and Economics Institute, an arm of the State Council, which sponsored *Eco-Economy* and hosted my visit to China. He also assembled the skilled team of translators and supervised the production of the Chinese edition for the People's Publishing House.

We have been pleased with the response of political leaders to *Eco-Economy*. The Romanian edition, for example, was launched by President Ion Iliescu in late January 2002.

The corporate interest in *Eco-Economy* was reflected in an invitation to address the Business Council. *Worldlink*, the magazine of the World Economic Forum in Davos, published a five-page feature adapted from *Eco-Economy*. *U.S. News and World Report* devoted three pages to a story on the enormous potential of wind power, which was inspired by *Eco-Economy*.

Within the foundation community, a number of foundations distributed copies of *Eco-Economy* to their directors, including the Educational Foundation of America, the Rasmussen Foundation, the Summit Foundation, the Turner Foundation, the Wallace Genetic Foundation, and the Weeden Foundation. In addition, the Turner Foundation distributed nearly 1,000 copies to their grantees, seeing it as a way to develop a shared vision of an eco-economy. Environmental groups that are marketing *Eco-Economy* range from the American Wind Energy Association to Population Connection (formerly Zero Population Growth).

As part of our dissemination effort, all of our research products, including this book, are available on our Web site. Permission for reprinting or excerpting portions of the book can be obtained from Reah Janise Kauffman at <rjkauffman@earth-policy.org> or by fax or mail. If you would like to receive our Eco-Economy Updates as they are released, please sign up via our Web site, or send us a note by e-mail.

We welcome your input, including any thoughts or recent papers or articles you would like to share with us.

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