



## Democratization of Sustainability

The attainment of sustainability will require mass participation in sustainable living practices. To achieve this condition, the Prout Institute advocates an approach that can be termed *the democratization of sustainability*.

In a democracy, people have both a right and a responsibility to participate in the political process. Extending this concept to the practice of sustainability, public policy should be put in place that recognizes people's right to live sustainably. This means that sustainable lifestyle choices would become more accessible – and more affordable – than unsustainable ones. People should not be financially penalized for living sustainably.

Complementing public policy that makes sustainable living options maximally accessible, citizens should internalize values that impel them to feel a deep responsibility to minimize the impact of their lifestyle on the planet.

Given below is an elaboration the principles underlying the democratization of sustainability, along with examples of some practical application of the concept in different sectors of life.

### Principles

1. The practice of sustainable living should be regarded as a right and responsibility of citizenship in a democratic society (much like voting).
2. Practice of sustainable living must be made financially accessibility to the general citizenry, and not just available to the affluent.
3. Citizens should take an active, empowered role in adopting sustainable living practices.
4. Public financing of sustainability practices must reference full and externalized costs born by citizenry and polity that are incurred by unsustainable practices.
5. Practices that degrade the public commons or distribute cost burdens to the citizenry should be prohibited, penalized, publicly discouraged, or permitted on the basis of net gains in the quality of life of the citizenry.

### Housing

- permit for sustainably designed buildings should be less costly than for unsustainably designed building permits
- permits should not be issued unless sufficient sustainability points earned
- permit fees should be increased for inclusion of unsustainable features and decreased for sustainable features
- design and advocacy services should be available for those seeking to implement

advanced sustainability features

## **Food**

organic certification fees should be paid by public financing  
public institutions should buy first from organic or IPM growers  
conversion to OG/IPM agriculture should receive subsidies

## **Health**

health vitalizing practices should be made available to all  
there should be public training and licensing support for self-help health trainers  
substance addiction rehab (including tobacco and alcohol) should be publicly available  
unhealthy foods should not be made available in public facilities

## **Transportation**

establishment of jeepney services to rural communities should receive public assistance

## **Energy**

property tax rebates should be given for zero net energy buildings  
utilities should share in the purchase/installation costs of solar hot water heaters

## **Commerce**

business incentives should go only to local enterprise, or "build-operate-transfer"  
enterprises  
a minimal capital drainage criteria should be required for business license approval  
incentives for investment in local enterprise producing sustainable technology

## **Water**

organic or IPM agriculture in public watersheds should receive property tax reduction  
consulting and subsidies should be available to farmers converting to OG/IPM  
herbicide spraying of forest lands in public watersheds should be taxed or prohibited

## **Forestry**

purchase of lumber for public projects should be from CSF certified products  
CSF certification costs should be publicly financed for local timber operations