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# **Fostering Sustainable Lifestyles for Posterity**

# Kariuki Muigua\*

#### **Abstract**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisages harmony between humanity and nature towards the ideal of Sustainable Development. Achieving this ideal requires creating and maintaining the conditions under which humanity and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations. One of the key ways through which this ideal can be realized is by humanity embracing sustainable lifestyles in harmony with nature. This paper critically examines the need to embrace sustainable lifestyles. The paper defines the idea of sustainable lifestyles and argues that it is an urgent priority in the wake of global challenges including the triple planetary crisis of climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution. The paper explores some of the techniques that can be adopted towards fostering sustainable lifestyles for posterity.

#### 1.0 Introduction

The United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out the global vision for sustainability<sup>1</sup>. It entails a plan of action for humanity and nature towards prosperity and the ideal of Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup>. The agenda seeks to foster prosperity for humanity by ending poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions and ensuring that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment<sup>3</sup>. Further, the agenda seeks to protect the planet from degradation,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Available at <a href="https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainablew20Development%20web.pdf">https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainablew20Development%20web.pdf</a> (Accessed on 16/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid

including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action to combat climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations<sup>4</sup>. The 2030 agenda therefore envisages harmony between humanity and nature towards the ideal of Sustainable Development.

The concept of Sustainable Development seeks to promote development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>5</sup>. It envisages creating and maintaining the conditions under which humanity and nature can exist in productive harmony to support present and future generations<sup>6</sup>. Sustainable Development aims to achieve this ideal by promoting environmental conservation, economic development and social progress<sup>7</sup>.

It has been noted that achieving Sustainable Development requires humanity to embrace sustainable lifestyles in harmony with nature<sup>8</sup>. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), it is necessary to harness individual decision-making for sustainability and integrate sustainable lifestyle principles across society, so that sustainable living, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, becomes the norm for people everywhere<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> World Commission on Environment and Development., 'Our Common Future.' Oxford, (Oxford University Press, 1987)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency., 'What is Sustainability?' Available at <a href="https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/learn-about-sustainability">https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/learn-about-sustainability</a> (Accessed on 16/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Fitzmaurice. M., 'The Principle of Sustainable Development in International Development Law.' International Sustainable Development Law., Vol 1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Why Sustainable Lifestyles Matter' Available at <a href="https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/sustainable-lifestyles/why-sustainable-lifestyles">https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/sustainable-lifestyles/why-sustainable-lifestyles</a> (Accessed on 16/05/2024)

This paper critically examines the need to embrace sustainable lifestyles. The paper defines the idea of sustainable lifestyles and argues that it is an urgent priority in the wake of global challenges including the triple planetary crisis of climate change, loss of biodiversity, and pollution. The paper explores some of the techniques that can be adopted towards fostering sustainable lifestyles for posterity.

# 2.0 Sustainable Lifestyles: Definition and Elements

A sustainable lifestyle has been defined as a cluster of habits and patterns of behaviour embedded in a society and facilitated by institutions, norms and infrastructures that frame individual choice, in order to minimize the use of natural resources and generation of wastes, while supporting fairness and prosperity for all<sup>10</sup>. It has also been described as a way of living that comprises of social behaviors and choices that minimize environmental degradation while supporting equitable socio-economic development and better quality of life for all<sup>11</sup>. In addition, a sustainable lifestyle also refers to a sum of all habits that together can be identified as a distinct way of living of a human being, which guarantees a basic quality of life that can be maintained indefinitely by a certain population and therefore remains within the carrying capacity of the ecoregion considered<sup>12</sup>. Sustainable lifestyles can therefore be seen as patterns of action and consumption, used by people to affiliate and differentiate themselves from others, which: meet basic needs, provide a better quality of life, minimise the use of natural resources

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Principles and Emerging Practices' Available at <a href="https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17016/fostering\_Communicating\_Sust\_Lifestyles.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y">https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/17016/fostering\_Communicating\_Sust\_Lifestyles.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Sustainable Lifestyles' Available at <a href="https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/sustainable-lifestyles">https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/sustainable-lifestyles</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Lubowiecki-Vikuk. A., Dabrowska. A., & Machnik. A., 'Responsible Consumer and Lifestyle: Sustainability Insights' Available at <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7442902/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7442902/</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

and emissions of waste and pollutants over the lifecycle, and do not jeopardise the needs of future generations<sup>13</sup>.

UNEP notes that a sustainable lifestyle minimizes ecological impacts while enabling a flourishing life for individuals, households, communities, and beyond<sup>14</sup>. A sustainable lifestyle is the product of individual and collective decisions about aspirations and about satisfying needs and adopting practices, which are in turn conditioned, facilitated, and constrained by societal norms, political institutions, public policies, infrastructures, markets, and culture<sup>15</sup>. The concept of sustainable lifestyles envisages altruistic and frugal behaviours of an individual who maintains harmony with the society, economy and environment<sup>16</sup>. This idea encompasses a wide range of activities, including energy and water conservation, waste recycling, green consumption and travel and tourism behaviours<sup>17</sup>. In addition, it has been noted that sustainable lifestyles entails activities and patters aimed at promoting efficient use of natural resources, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and curbing waste and pollution<sup>18</sup>. The concept of sustainable lifestyles acknowledges that sustainability challenges cannot be solved only by improving efficiency, but should also require behavioural changes that entail empowerment of individuals and a concerted action of all societal actors, including governments, businesses, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), media and education, which play an important role in shaping lifestyles<sup>19</sup>. Achieving sustainable lifestyles requires changes at cultural, social, environmental and economic levels by using strategies that raise awareness and developing new values and visions for sustainable societies<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> United Nations., 'Sustainable Lifestyles and Education for Sustainable Consumption' Available at https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/marrakech/gpaper2chap7.pdf (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Principles and Emerging Practices' Op Cit

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Lubowiecki-Vikuk. A., Dabrowska. A., & Machnik. A., 'Responsible Consumer and Lifestyle: Sustainability Insights' Op Cit

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Sustainable Lifestyles' Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> United Nations., 'Sustainable Lifestyles and Education for Sustainable Consumption' Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid

Fostering sustainable lifestyles is a pertinent global concern. It has been noted that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires a substantial changes in our lifestyles<sup>21</sup>. To advance the SDGs, complex and fundamental transformations of our societal systems are required<sup>22</sup>. It requires humanity to change their daily behavior, ultimately shifting human lifestyles towards sustainability<sup>23</sup>.

It has been estimated that by 2050, the world's population may reach 10 billion increasing the demand for food, fashion, travel, housing and related aspirations<sup>24</sup>. With the planet's resources already being stretched, this enormous rise in population means that an increasing number of people will be unable to meet basic needs putting pressure on the available resources<sup>25</sup>. It has been asserted that in a world stretched thin for resources and under the threat of global biodiversity loss and climate change, our lifestyles decisions are putting the planet at risk<sup>26</sup>. For example humanity consumes water faster than can be replenished from underground aquifers<sup>27</sup>; burns hydrocarbons as global supplies dwindle and global temperatures rise<sup>28</sup>; and consumes antiquated diets that inefficiently use plants and animals<sup>29</sup>.

Some of the major global challenges facing humanity have been attributed to our lifestyles. For example, the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Yamane. T., & Kaneko. S., 'Is the Younger Generation a Driving Force Toward Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals? Survey Experiments' Available at <a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0959652621001529?via=ihub">https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0959652621001529?via=ihub</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Sustainable Lifestyles' Op Cit

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Posterity Institute., 'Action Steps for a Sustainable Lifestyle – Conscious Consumerism' Available at <a href="https://www.theposterityinstitute.org/action-steps-for-a-sustainable-lifestyle-conscious-consumerism/">https://www.theposterityinstitute.org/action-steps-for-a-sustainable-lifestyle-conscious-consumerism/</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Ibid

biodiversity loss has been attributed to human behaviour and activities<sup>30</sup>. Human activities are the main drivers of climate change<sup>31</sup>. Energy use, industry, transport, buildings and agriculture attributed to human activities are the main causes for release of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere<sup>32</sup>. The impacts of climate change are already being manifested through increased intensity and severity of droughts, water scarcity, wildfires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting polar ice, catastrophic storms and declining biodiversity threatening the sustainable development agenda<sup>33</sup>. Further, human activities including emissions from motor vehicles and industries and cooking with polluting fuels and technologies are the major causes of air pollution<sup>34</sup>. Air Pollution has been identified as the largest cause of disease and premature death in the world<sup>35</sup>. In addition, biodiversity loss which refers to the decline or disappearance of biological diversity, which includes animals, plants and ecosystems has also been attributed to human activities<sup>36</sup>. This problem is caused by activities such as overfishing, habitat loss as a result of deforestation, and desertification due to climate change<sup>37</sup>. According to UNEP, the biggest driver of biodiversity loss is how people use the land and sea<sup>38</sup>. This includes the conversion of land covers such as forests, wetlands and other natural habitats for agricultural and urban uses<sup>39</sup>. It has been noted that biodiversity is the baseline for everything on the planet<sup>40</sup>. Biodiversity loss impacts food supplies and access to clean water among other vital resources threatening our future on the planet<sup>41</sup>. It is therefore

<sup>30</sup> United Nations Climate Change., 'What is the Triple Planetary Crisis?' Available at https://unfccc.int/news/what-is-the-triple-planetary-crisis (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Five Drivers of the Nature Crisis' Available at <a href="https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/five-drivers-nature-">https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/five-drivers-nature-</a>

crisis#:~:text=The%20biggest%20driver%20of%20biodiversity,conversion%20to%20other%20land%20use

s. (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> United Nations Climate Change., 'What is the Triple Planetary Crisis?' Op Cit

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

necessary to foster sustainable lifestyles in order to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Fostering sustainable lifestyles is therefore key for sustainability. It has been noted that current consumption patterns and lifestyles have been formed over centuries by our civilisation and are driven by economic forces, technological progress, political settings, environmental issues, sociological and cultural contexts and psychological determinants<sup>42</sup>. For example, economic development leads to improved productivity that leads to reduced products prices and increased incomes resulting in higher purchasing power<sup>43</sup>. In addition, technological advances lead to supply of more efficient products and technologies and also create new visions for lifestyles or conditions, which could stimulate people to adapt more resource intensive lifestyles<sup>44</sup>. Further, it has been noted that socio-psychological drivers of current consumption patterns and lifestyles include personal motives and influences of the social environment<sup>45</sup>. For example, people purchase goods and services for their qualities and functions, as much as for their symbolic value that serves as a marker of social status<sup>46</sup>. Material possessions are often perceived as a measure of success, power and happiness in most societies<sup>47</sup>. In addition, cultural and historical aspects also influence lifestyles and unspoken codes of conduct in each society<sup>48</sup>. It is therefore important to understand these factors in order to foster sustainable lifestyles for posterity. Sustainable lifestyles entail understanding how our lifestyle choices impact the world around us and finding ways for everyone to live better<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> United Nations., 'Sustainable Lifestyles and Education for Sustainable Consumption' Op Cit

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Ibid

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Sustainable Lifestyles' Op Cit

# 3.0 Fostering Sustainable Lifestyles

The need to foster sustainable lifestyles is envisaged under Agenda 21 which advocates for new concepts of wealth and prosperity which allow higher standards of living through changed lifestyles and are less dependent on the Earth's finite resources<sup>50</sup>. It has been noted that Agenda 21 paved the way for the emerging understanding that the sustainability challenge cannot be solved only by improving efficiency, but should also include behavioural changes<sup>51</sup>. In addition, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisages the ideal of sustainable lifestyles for posterity<sup>52</sup>. SDG 12 urges humanity to embrace sustainable consumption and production patterns<sup>53</sup>. It sets out several targets towards achieving this ideal including ensuring sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources<sup>54</sup>; reducing food losses along production and supply chains; achieving environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste throughout their lifecycle<sup>55</sup>; reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse<sup>56</sup>; promoting public procurement practices that are sustainable<sup>57</sup>; ensuring that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature<sup>58</sup>; and supporting developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technical capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production<sup>59</sup>. It is imperative to achieve these targets in order to ensure sustainable lifestyles for posterity.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Rio de Janerio, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992., 'Agenda 21.' Available at <a href="https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf?gl=1\*9uipp7\*\_ga\*MjA2NDk2MDMxMS4xNjcxMjU5NTEw\*\_ga\_TK9BQL5X7Z\*MTY5NDU5NjE3MS41NS4xLjE2OTQ1OTgzODUuMC4wLjA">https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf?gl=1\*9uipp7\*\_ga\*MjA2NDk2MDMxMS4xNjcxMjU5NTEw\*\_ga\_TK9BQL5X7Z\*MTY5NDU5NjE3MS41NS4xLjE2OTQ1OTgzODUuMC4wLjA</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> United Nations., 'Sustainable Lifestyles and Education for Sustainable Consumption' Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Op Cit

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

<sup>58</sup> Ibid

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid

Africa Union's *Agenda* 2063<sup>60</sup> also seeks to ensure sustainable lifestyles in the continent. Among the key aspirations of Agenda 2063 is building a prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and Sustainable Development<sup>61</sup>. This aspiration seeks to ensure environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies and communities in Africa<sup>62</sup>. Agenda 2063 sets out several priorities towards achieving this goal including promoting sustainable natural resource management, fostering biodiversity conservation, enhancing sustainable consumption and production patterns, achieving water security, enhancing climate resilience and natural disasters preparedness and prevention, and embracing renewable energy<sup>63</sup>. Agenda 2063 acknowledges that in order to achieve sustainable consumption patterns in Africa, all households, communities, and government entities should be aware and lead sustainable life styles with respect to the use of water, electricity, and design/construction of houses<sup>64</sup>. It further acknowledges that sustainable livelihoods and responsible citizenship are vital for Sustainable Development in Africa<sup>65</sup>. Realizing the aspirations, goals, and priority actions set out under Agenda 2063 is therefore vital in fostering sustainable lifestyles for posterity in Africa.

Ensuring sustainable lifestyles is therefore a key agenda towards Sustainable Development. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to embrace responsible consumption and production patters<sup>66</sup>. According to the United Nations, ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns is key to sustain the livelihoods of current and future generations<sup>67</sup>. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Africa Union., 'Agenda 2063' Available at <a href="https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework\_document\_book.pdf">https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-framework\_document\_book.pdf</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Ibid

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

<sup>64</sup> Ibid

<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> United Nations., 'Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns' Available at <a href="https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/">https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-consumption-production/</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

individuals to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. This can involve consuming less, choosing products with lower environmental impacts, and reducing the carbon footprint of day-to-day activities<sup>68</sup>.

It has been correctly observed that promoting responsible consumption and production is a fundamental pillar of sustainability that directly impacts the well-being of future generations<sup>69</sup>. It involves a shift in our mindset and practices towards using resources efficiently and minimizing waste<sup>70</sup>. It has been opined that responsible consumption is not about sacrificing the quality of life that human beings live but rather making informed choices that benefit both the present and future generations for posterity<sup>71</sup>. Individuals should therefore prioritize responsible consumption and patters including choosing products with sustainable and eco-friendly attributes, reducing energy and water consumption in households, minimizing food waste, and supporting local and sustainable agriculture<sup>72</sup>. Further, communities can play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable lifestyles through responsible consumption by establishing local initiatives and sharing resources<sup>73</sup>. It has been noted that community gardens, tool-sharing programs, and bulk purchasing cooperatives are examples of community collaborative efforts that reduce waste and encourage responsible resource use towards sustainability<sup>74</sup>. Further, it is vital for governments to implement and enforce policies and regulations towards responsible consumption and production through measures such as setting targets for reducing waste generation, promoting circular economy practices, and supporting sustainable procurement policies<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> The Posterity Advocacy Hub: Principle 2 Championing Sustainability., Available at https://medium.com/@posterityadvocacyhub/the-posterity-advocacy-hub-principle-2-championingsustainability-73c303723d2a (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>70</sup> Ibid

<sup>71</sup> Ibid

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Ibid

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> United Nations., 'Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns' Op Cit

It is also necessary to enhance education and awareness on sustainable lifestyles<sup>76</sup>. Fostering sustainable lifestyles requires educating individuals about the environmental consequences of their choices<sup>77</sup>. By raising awareness and providing information on sustainable practices, we can empower people to make more informed decisions and reduce their ecological footprint<sup>78</sup>. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the role of education in fostering sustainable lifestyles<sup>79</sup>. SDG 4 seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all<sup>80</sup>. Among the targets under this goal is to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote Sustainable Development including through education for Sustainable Development and sustainable lifestyles<sup>81</sup>. Strengthening education and awareness is therefore key in fostering sustainable lifestyles.

Another key approach towards fostering sustainable lifestyles is implementing circular economy<sup>82</sup>. Circular economy is a model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible<sup>83</sup>. It is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated<sup>84</sup>. In a circular economy, products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> The Posterity Advocacy Hub: Principle 2 Championing Sustainability., Op Cit

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

<sup>78</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> United Nations General Assembly., 'Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' 21 October 2015, A/RES/70/1., Op Cit

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Ibid

<sup>82</sup> United Nations., 'Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns' Op Cit

<sup>83</sup> European Parliament., 'Circular Economy: Definition, Importance and Benefits.' Available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/economy/20151201STO05603/circulareconomydefinition-importance-

andbenefits#:~:text=The%20circular%20economy%20is%20a,cycle%20of%20products%20is%20extended (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

Ellen MacArthur Foundation.,' What is Circular Economy?.' Available at https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/circulareconomyintroduction/overview#:~:text=The%20circular%20economy%20is%20a,remanufacture%2C%20

recycling %2C%20and%20composting (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

recycling, and composting<sup>85</sup>. According to the United Nations, transitioning to a circular economy involves designing products for longevity, reparability, and recyclability<sup>86</sup>. It also involves promoting practices such as reusing, refurbishing, and recycling products to minimize waste and resource depletion<sup>87</sup>. UNEP notes that circular economy is essential in achieving the SDGs and combating global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution<sup>88</sup>. It is therefore necessary to implement circular economy by embracing practices such as reducing, reusing, recycling, repairing, and refurbishment of materials and products<sup>89</sup>. Promoting circular economy is a key pillar of sustainable lifestyles towards sustainability by minimizing waste and promoting sustainable use of natural resources<sup>90</sup>. It is therefore necessary to implement circular economy in order to realize the ideal of sustainable lifestyles.

Finally, it is imperative to promote energy efficiency<sup>91</sup>. The idea of energy efficiency means using less energy to perform the same task therefore eliminating energy waste<sup>92</sup>. Energy efficiency achieves several benefits including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, reducing demand for energy imports, and lowering energy costs on a household and economy-wide level<sup>93</sup>. It has been noted that improving energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective measures that countries can take to reduce greenhouse gas

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> United Nations., 'Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns' Op Cit

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Circularity' Available at <a href="https://www.unep.org/circularity">https://www.unep.org/circularity</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>89</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> United Nations Development Programme., 'What is Circular Economy and Why Does it Matter?.' Available at <a href="https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-iscircular-economy-and-how-it-helps-fight-climate-change">https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-iscircular-economy-and-how-it-helps-fight-climate-change</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> Environmental and Energy Study Institute., 'Energy Efficiency' Available at <a href="https://www.eesi.org/topics/energy-">https://www.eesi.org/topics/energy-</a>

efficiency/description#:~:text=Energy%20efficiency%20simply%20means%20using,household%20and%20economy%2Dwide%20level. (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>92</sup> Ibid

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

emissions<sup>94</sup>. It is therefore necessary for individuals, communities, organizations, and countries to integrate energy efficiency into their sustainable production and consumption activities<sup>95</sup>. Some of the key approaches that can be embraced towards energy efficiency include adopting renewable sources of energy including solar, and wind, utilizing clean sources of energy for cooking, conserving energy by turning off lights and appliances when not being used, investing in energy efficient appliances, and reducing energy consumption, designing and constructing energy efficient buildings, and embracing energy efficient modes of transport including cycling, walking, and public transport<sup>96</sup>. Promoting energy efficiency is therefore vital in ensuring sustainable lifestyles and combating global environmental challenges including climate change and the energy crisis<sup>97</sup>.

The foregoing techniques are key in fostering sustainable lifestyles for posterity.

#### 4.0 Conclusion

Sustainable lifestyles are vital in minimizing ecological impacts while enabling a flourishing life for individuals, households, communities, and nations<sup>98</sup>. The ideal of sustainable lifestyles entails activities and patters aimed at promoting efficient use of natural resources, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and curbing waste and pollution<sup>99</sup>. Human activities have been at the heart of major global challenges including the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss<sup>100</sup>. Fostering sustainable lifestyles is therefore key in solving these problems and achieving the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'About Energy Efficiency' Available at <a href="https://www.unep.org/topics/energy/energy-efficiency/about-energy-efficiency">https://www.unep.org/topics/energy/energy-efficiency/about-energy-efficiency</a> (Accessed on 17/05/2024)

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> Ibid

<sup>97</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Fostering and Communicating Sustainable Lifestyles: Principles and Emerging Practices' Op Cit

<sup>99</sup> United Nations Environment Programme., 'Sustainable Lifestyles' Op Cit

<sup>100</sup> United Nations Climate Change., 'What is the Triple Planetary Crisis?' Op Cit

Sustainable Development agenda<sup>101</sup>. The ideal of sustainable lifestyles can be achieved through embracing responsible consumption and production patters<sup>102</sup>; enhancing education and awareness on sustainable lifestyles<sup>103</sup>; implementing circular economy<sup>104</sup>; and promoting energy efficiency<sup>105</sup>. Fostering sustainable lifestyles is a key agenda that needs to be harnessed for posterity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Yamane. T., & Kaneko. S., 'Is the Younger Generation a Driving Force Toward Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals? Survey Experiments' Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> United Nations., 'Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns' Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> The Posterity Advocacy Hub: Principle 2 Championing Sustainability., Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> United Nations., 'Goal 12: Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns' Op Cit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Environmental and Energy Study Institute., 'Energy Efficiency' Op Cit

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