

Partnerships for Sustainability: Some Musings and Observations

Charles M. Vest

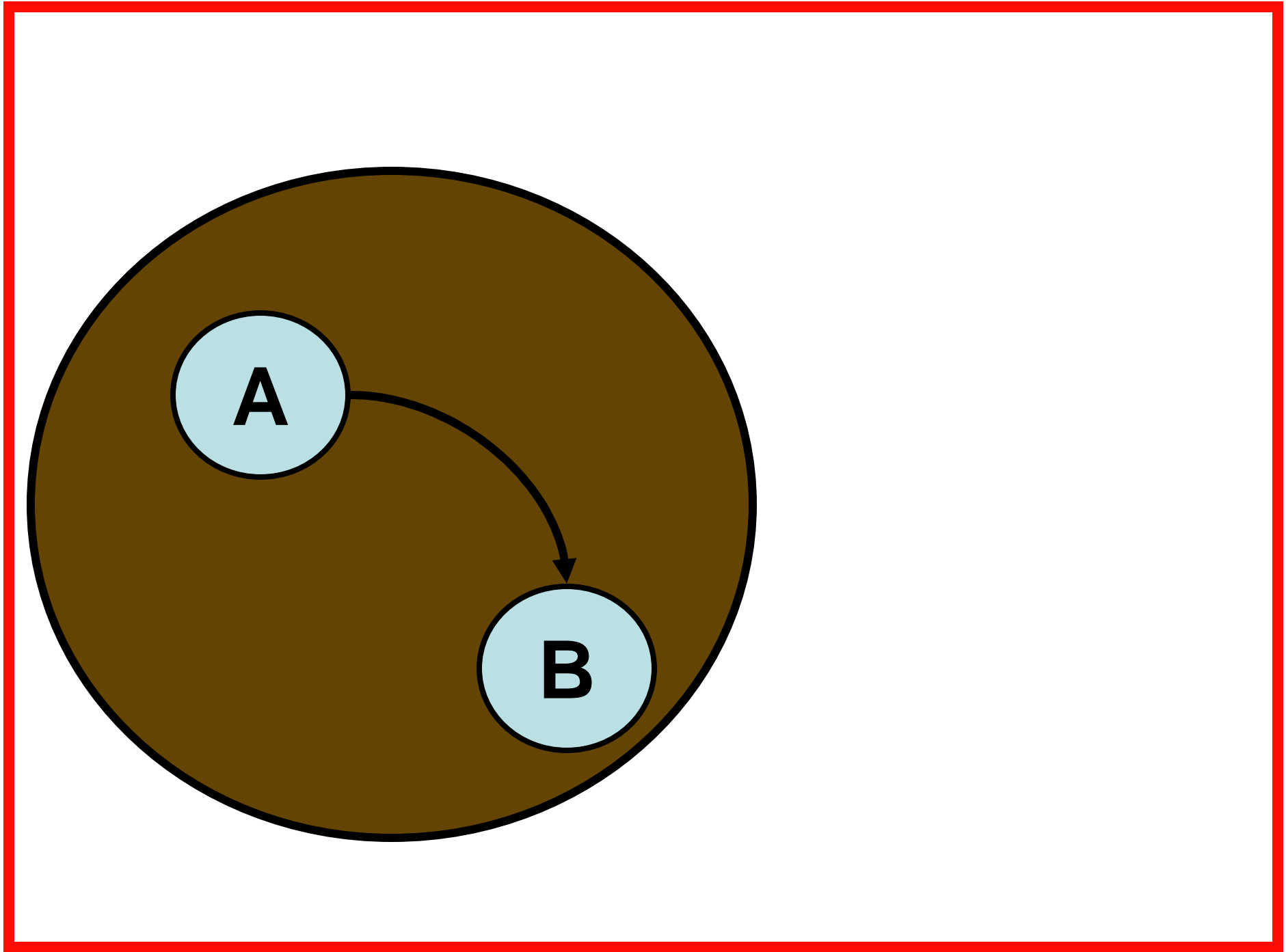
President, National Academy of Engineering

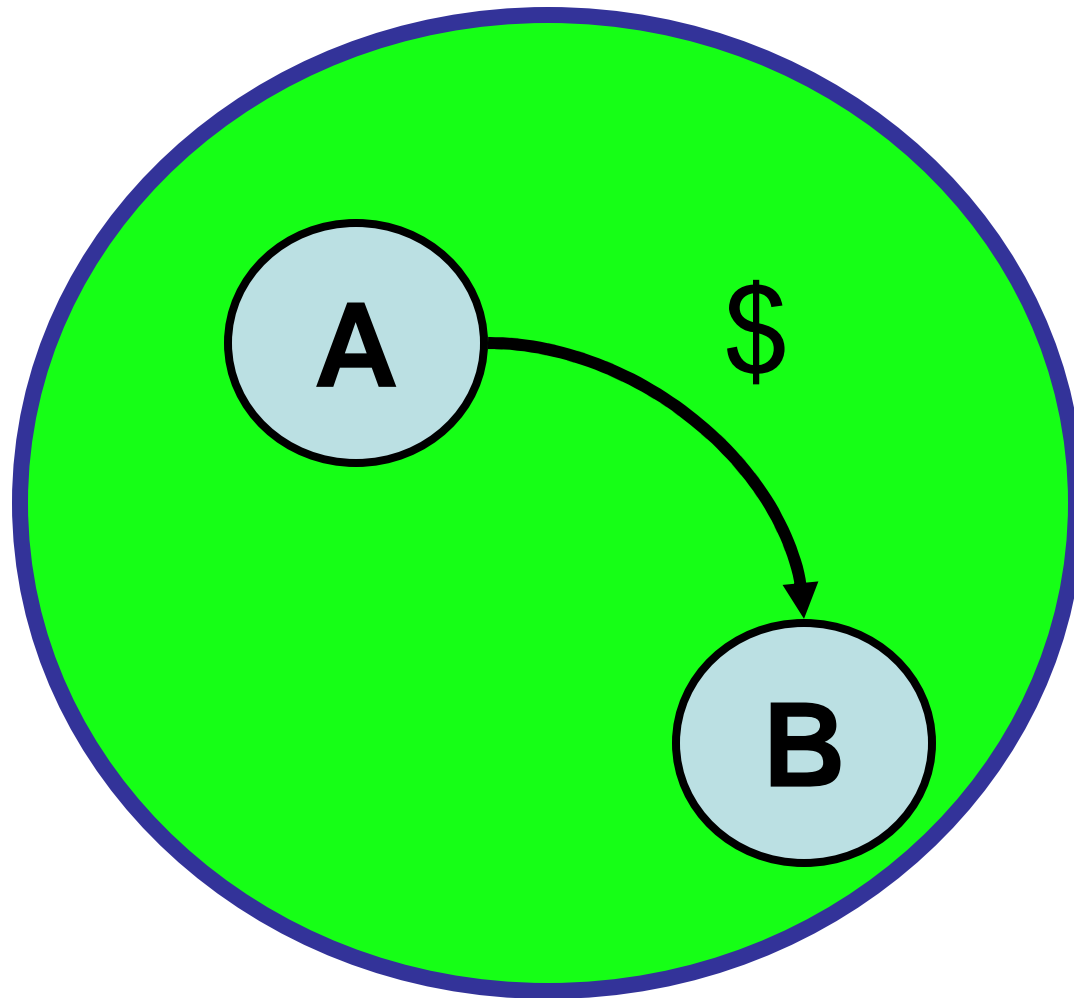
Partnerships for Sustainability

The National Academies

Washington, DC

June 18, 2008





“Saving our environment is a question of whether people in Country A will spend money in Country B for the common good.”

--Jacques Cousteau

True, but Sustainable is more complex

Partnerships are key

- Cross-sector
- Cross-national

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships

- What choice is there?
- There is no other path.

What I have learned about Partnerships

- They are hard to put together.
- They work well on the ground.
- **Trust** is their most essential element.

What else I have learned about Partnerships

Arrogance is the biggest danger:

Each sector thinks it alone knows how to do the job.

SUSTAINABILITY

***“There can be no such thing
as sustainability.”***

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as sustainability.”***

-- A Distinguished Economist

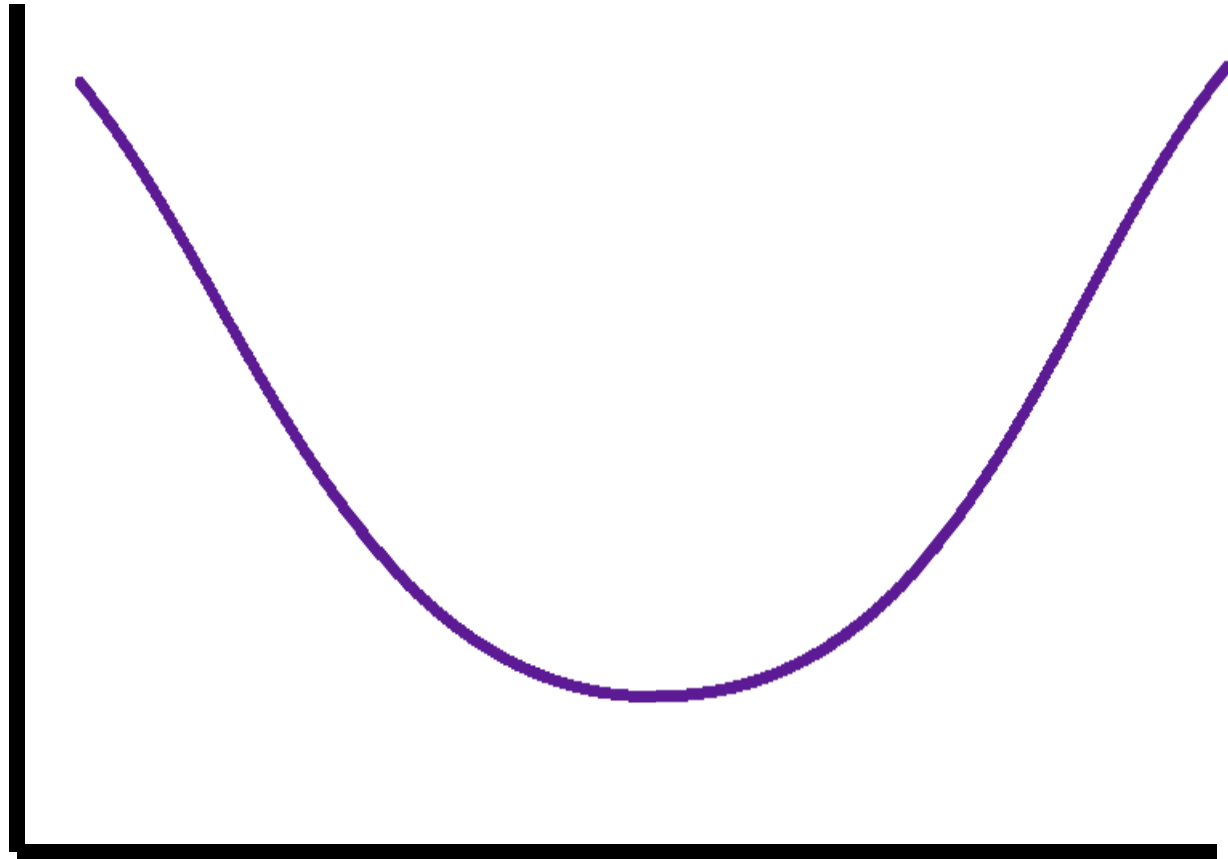
What does it mean anyway?

What does it mean anyway?

It depends on whom you ask
... and when ... and where

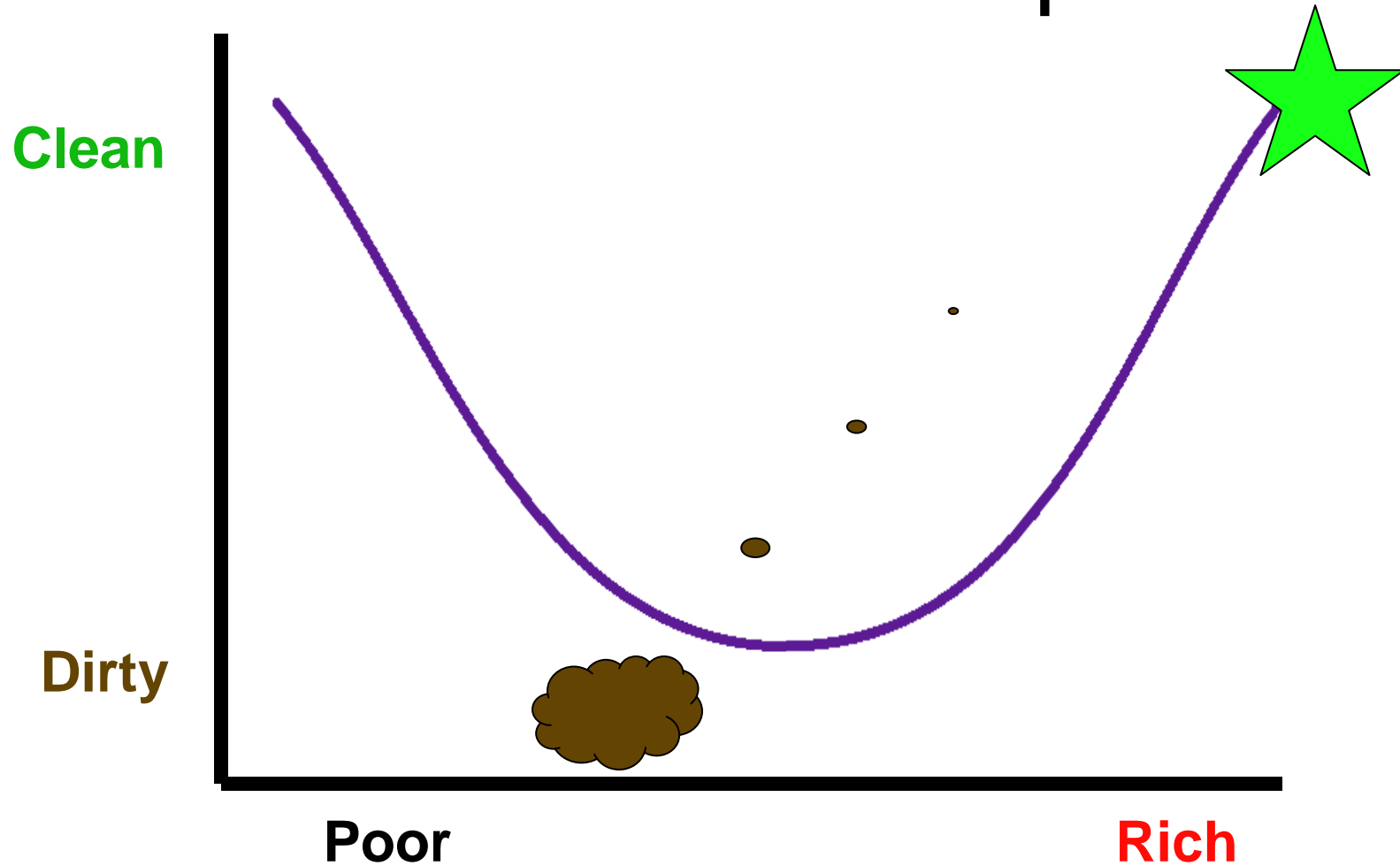
***Is it about an inevitable
relationship?***

Pollution and Development



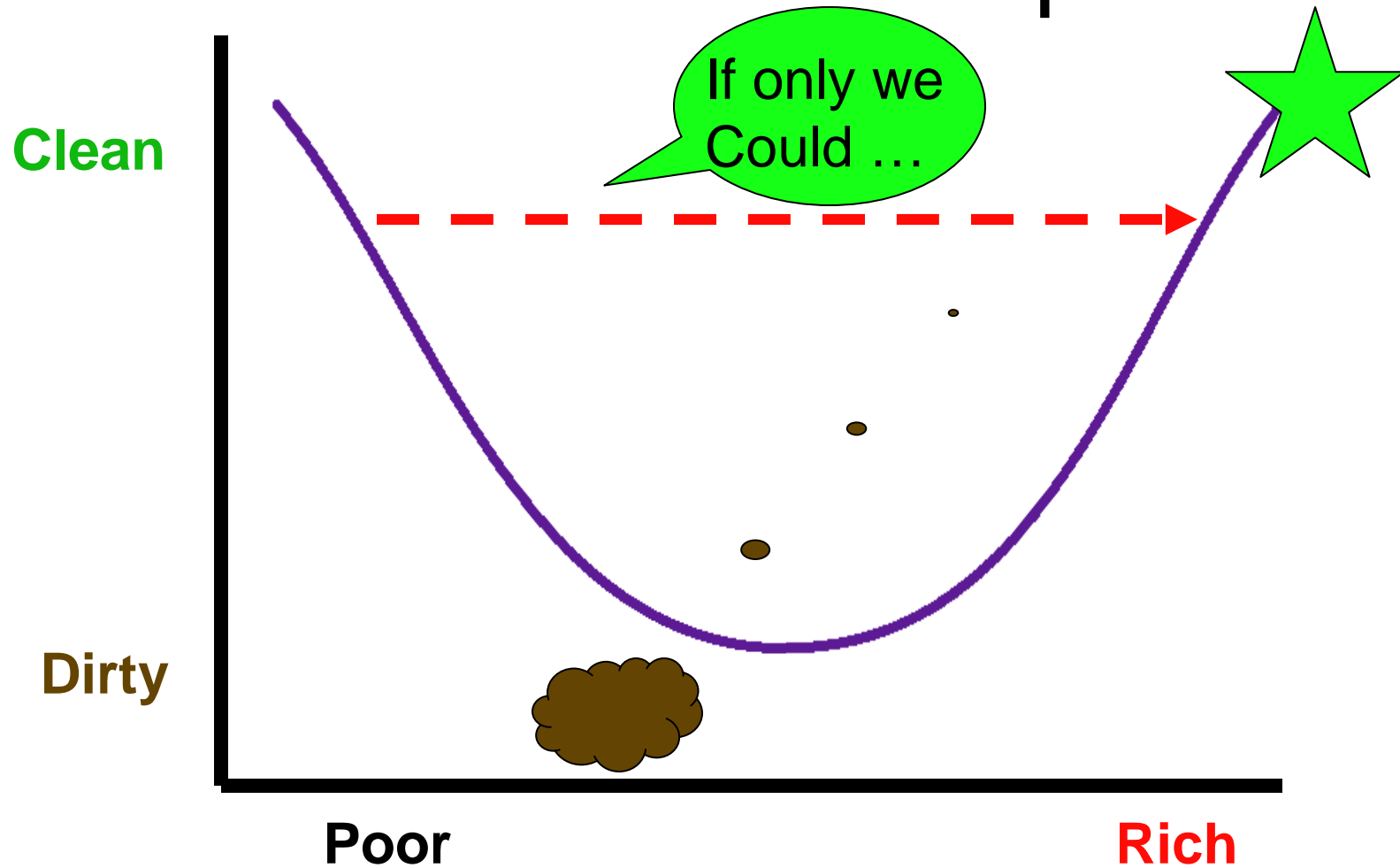
Source: Xu Kuangdi, President, Chinese Academy of Engineering

Pollution and Development



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Pollution and Development



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Is it about running out of oil?

***“The Stone Age didn’t end
because we ran out of stones.”***

***“The Stone Age didn’t end
because we ran out of stones.”***

-- A Japanese Colleague

Whatever it is, it involves

- Globalization
- Development
- Technological Progress
- Human needs and aspirations

What is really globalized?

- Flow of knowledge and information (IT)
- Business
 - National Companies → Multinationals → Globally Integrated Enterprises
- Innovation
- Opportunity

Food for fuel?

Food for ~~fuel~~ thought?

***The public is gaining at least
a sense of how energy, food,
and fuels are interrelated.***

Food for thought

***“You can’t sell a Prius
in Germany.”***

***“You can’t sell a Prius
in Germany.”***

-- A German Engineer

Glimmer of Hope?

Hot, Flat, and Crowded:

Glimmer of Hope?

Hot, Flat, and Crowded:
*Why We Need a Green Revolution--
and How it Can Renew America*

-- Thomas L. Friedman
Forthcoming Sept. 8, 2008

Glimmer of Hope?

The Rise of the Humble Engineer

Glimmer of Hope?

The Rise of the Humble Engineer

*Demand for Efficient Data Centers Puts
Skilled Workers in the Spotlight*

The New York Times
June 17, 2008

CLOSING COMMENT

What we will need

- An objective understanding of the situation
- A view of the future
- A determination of our legacy
- A resolution of the interests of Rich and Poor

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- A resolution of the interests of Rich and Poor
 - Diplomats, Politicians

Thank you, and best
wishes for success in your
important work.