Editor's Note: Issue XIX, January 2018

Dear Readers,

The United States, formerly one of the key players in international sustainability, suffered major blows in 2017. An intention to withdraw from the Paris Agreement and the systematic undermining of the Environmental Protection Agency have delegitimized, muted, or ignored many of the voices pushing for environmental progress. An international chorus including religious figures such as Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama, politicians from Emmanuel Macron to Koichi Yamamoto, and US-based independent businesses and corporations have all castigated the Trump administration for their deviant policies. Trust in politicians and political parties is falling and populism is reemerging, while natural disasters are increasing in destructive intensity and scarcity of food is growing. Given these sobering realities, it is altogether too easy to ask, "What's the point?"

Amid this discouragement, it is with great pleasure and optimism that I announce the publication of Issue XIX of *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development*. This issue considers often overlooked or marginalized people, groups, and ideas. Our authors bring to light their accomplishments and potential while critically questioning concepts generally regarded as 'good' or 'normal'. In this geographically and intellectually diverse issue, our editing team has carefully compiled a set of articles that we hope can inspire a renewed belief in and dedication to a sustainable future as we move forward into 2018.

We begin with a thoughtful critique of the often indiscriminately-lauded Paris Agreement by Johanna Caytas. Her exploration of the legal limitations of the Agreement is followed by a discussion of its importance as a driver of conceptual change, while challenging us with intriguing suggestions for future international collaboration. In a similar vein, Jon Schroeder confronts the often-willful environmental ignorance that accompanies meat-based food choices with an investigation into the sustainability of various diets that models the different amounts of phosphorus required to sustain them.

Lisa Dale's research into the UN's Climate Resilience Initiative: Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape is a structural text that painstakingly establishes key indicators and global baselines. In so doing, it provides a reference point for future analysis of this climate resiliency initiative. In an exploration of the development of sustainably-minded transportation infrastructure, Carleigh Ghent stresses the importance of a multi-faceted approach to development that values economic growth alongside public health and sustainable ecosystems.

Many of the articles in this issue focus on local or national implementation of sustainably-minded initiatives. Anne Steele's field notes from research in Bhutan establish an entirely different set of absolutely critical middlemen, those she dubs the 'actors in-between'. Belofsky and Zemskova describe their resounding success in Nepal with sustainable Earthbag technology that enables accessible, ecological methods of residential construction. Kevin Fan and Sang Nam explore the huge potential for geothermal energy production in Indonesia, currently severely underutilized. This resource could improve the well-being of millions while drastically reducing greenhouse emissions. Nicasio Espina Jr. conducted an in-depth case study of resiliency in a neighborhood, or *barangay*, in the Philippines. His findings identify useful alternatives that local stakeholders and authorities can implement to shore up resilience and adaptive capacity. In a foundational study of peace and sustainable development, Maria Fontecha-Tiraldo explores the interactions of small Colombian

Editor's Note: Issue XIX, January 2018

communities with the FARC, the now-active national government and environmentally-focused goals.

As always, Issue XIX of *Consilience* continues to push the boundaries of sustainable development. Our final piece confronts one of the most pervasive and often detrimental dichotomies in academia: the art-science schism. Lauren Butler's introduction of a new framework with which to understand sustainable development is only fitting in our era in which upheaval, both global and personal, has become the norm.

It is my sincere hope that the articles we've assembled in this volume will inspire innovative, transdisciplinary possibilities, shed light on new or overlooked concepts and populations, and above all renew a sense of creative optimism in our community.

As always, we welcome and encourage constructive feedback and commentary. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at consiliencejournal@gmail.com.

Ambria Benesch

Editor-in-Chief