

# **"Perspectives on *Limits to Growth*: Challenges to Building a Sustainable Planet"**

**A One-Day Symposium Co-sponsored by The Club of Rome and the Smithsonian's Consortium for Understanding and Sustaining a Biodiverse Planet**

**1 March 2012**

**The Rasmuson Theater  
National Museum of the American Indian**

In the spring, the Club of Rome and the Smithsonian Institution will be hosting a joint symposium in Washington, DC to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the launching of *Limits to Growth*, the first report of the Club of Rome published in 1972. This book, which sold over ten million copies in various languages, was one of the earliest scholarly works to recognize that the world was fast approaching its sustainable limits. Forty years later, the planet continues to face many of the same economic, social, and environmental challenges as when the book was first published.

The symposium, which will be held in the Rasmuson Theater of the National Museum of the American Indian on the Mall, will be divided into two sessions. The morning session will focus on the lessons of *Limits to Growth* and will consist of presentations by two of the original authors of the work, Dennis Meadows and Jørgen Randers. These talks will be complemented by an outside perspective from Lester Brown, President of the Earth Policy Institute and author of *World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse*.

The afternoon session will address the difficult challenges of preserving biodiversity, adjusting to a changing climate, and solving the societal issues now facing the planet. Dr. Doug Erwin, Senior Scientist and Curator of Paleobiology at the National Museum of Natural History and author of *Extinction* (Columbia University press), will address how climate has structured biodiversity over long periods of time in the geologic history of the planet. Prof. Richard Alley, a well-known geoscientist from Pennsylvania State University and presenter and author of the of the PBS series and book *Earth: The Operators' Manual*, will speak on climate change in the present-day world. Finally, Neva Goodwin, the Director of the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University and lead author of *Microeconomics in Context* and *Macroeconomics in Context*, will address the many societal challenges that must be addressed in a world without growth, from ecological health to restructuring corporations for social responsibility. The symposium will end with a thought-provoking panel discussion among the speakers on future steps for building a sustainable planet. The panel will be moderated by Dr. Eva J. Pell, Under Secretary for Science.

The Symposium will be open to the public and may be of particular interest to scholars, educators, and policy makers at Federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, economic think tanks, universities, and environmental organizations in the Washington metropolitan area.