

Towards Green Economy – A Sustainable Consumption Perspective

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Drastic reduction of rich countries' footprints

- ▶ Highly desirable but very unlikely
- ▶ Lock-ins (technical, social, economic)
- ▶ Some reductions possible but not to sustainable levels even within several decades

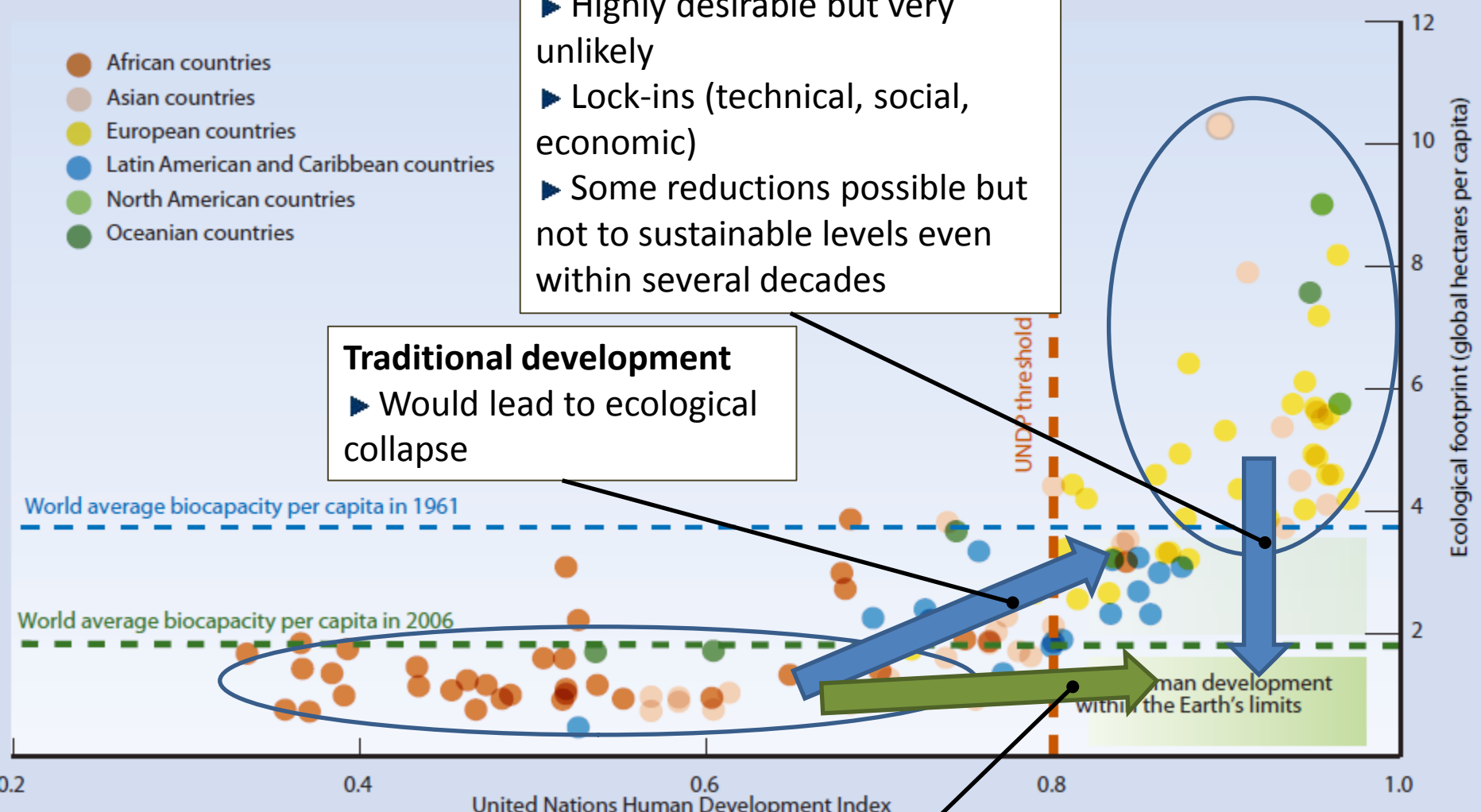
Traditional development

- ▶ Would lead to ecological collapse

Radically different development

- ▶ Very challenging but potentially achievable

- African countries
- Asian countries
- European countries
- Latin American and Caribbean countries
- North American countries
- Oceanian countries



- African countries
- Asian countries
- European countries
- Latin American and Caribbean countries
- North American countries
- Oceanian countries

• No country has ever been here
• We do not know that it is possible to get here

World average biocapacity per capita in 1961

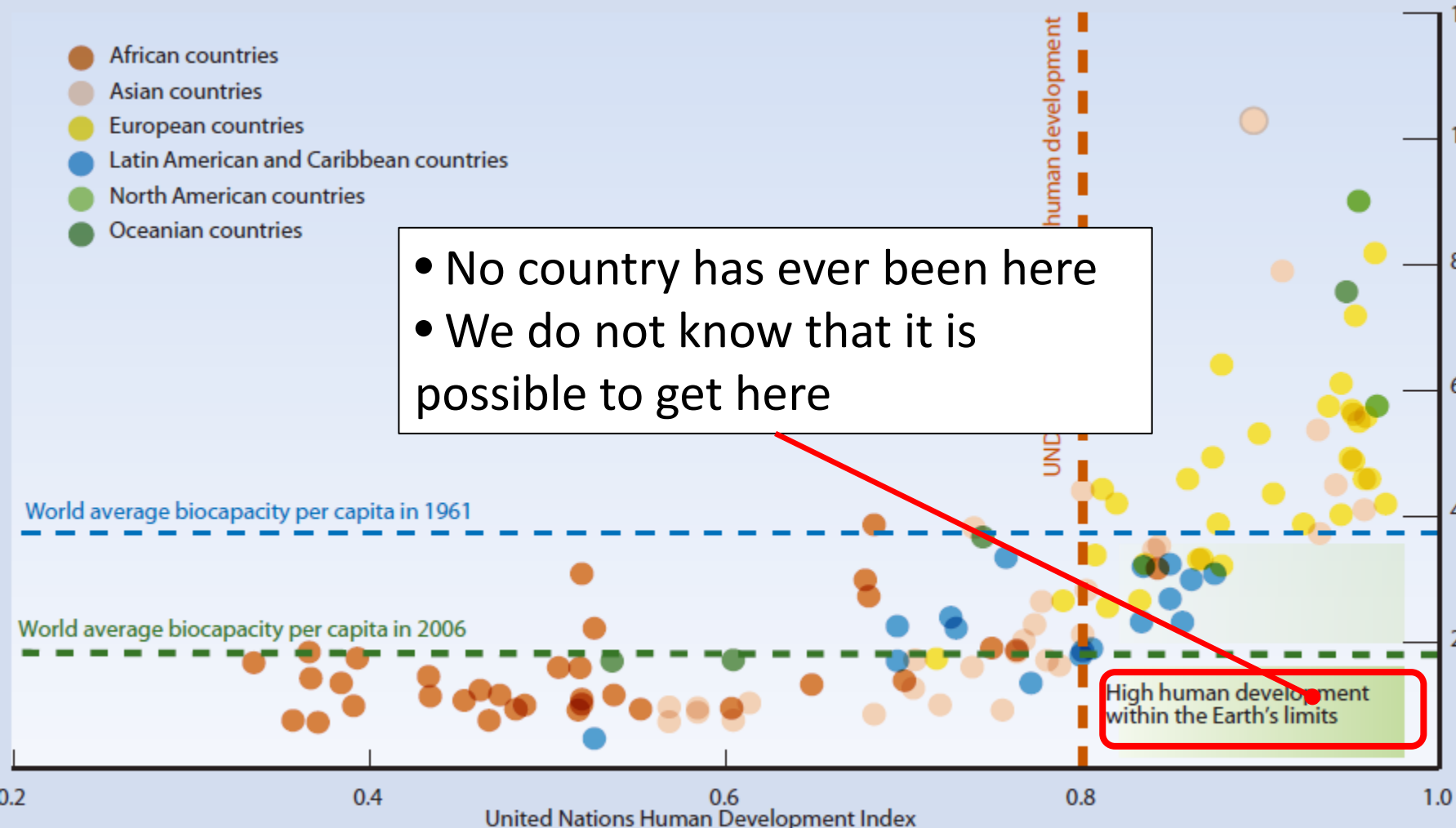
World average biocapacity per capita in 2006

human development

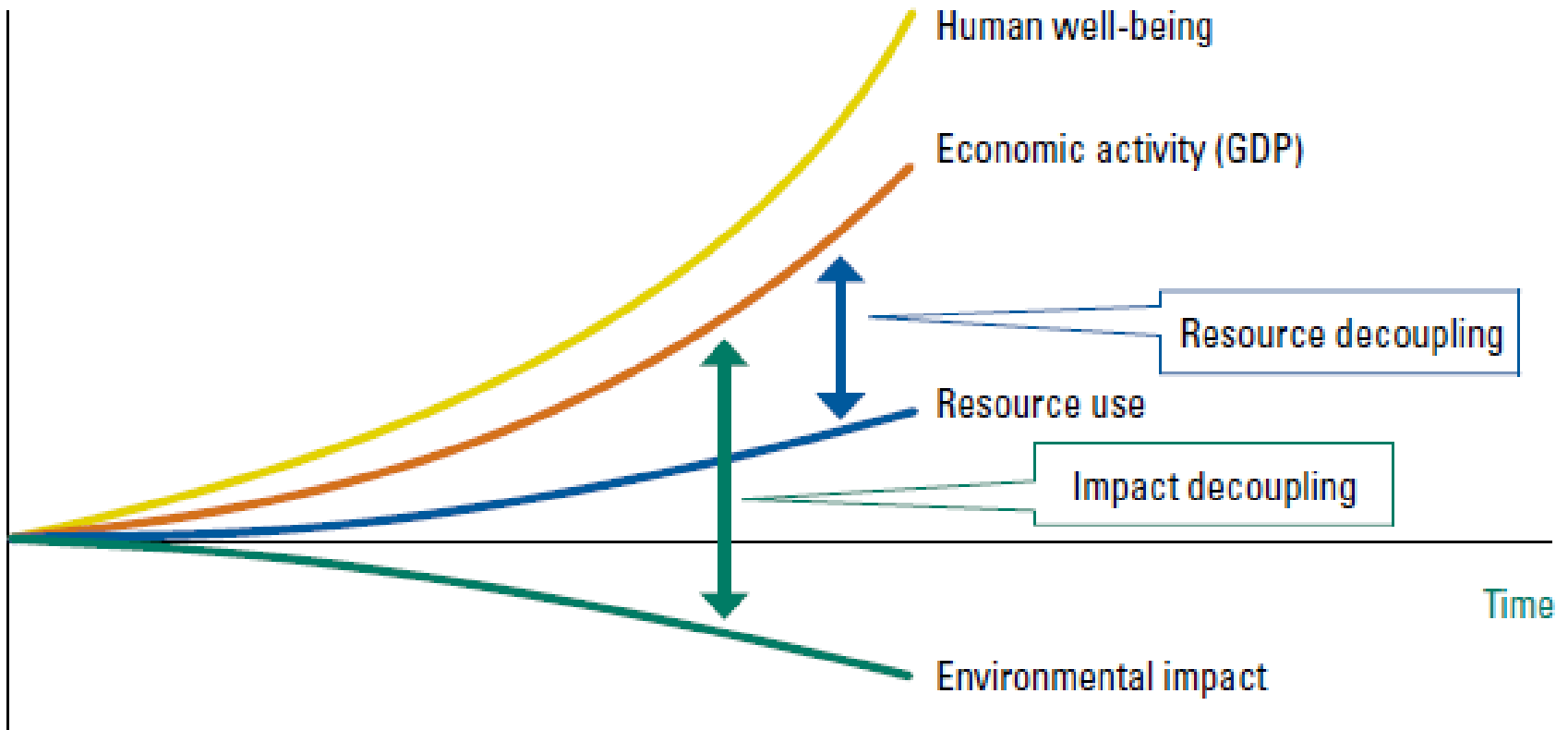
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High human development within the Earth's limits

Ecological footprint (global hectares per capita)



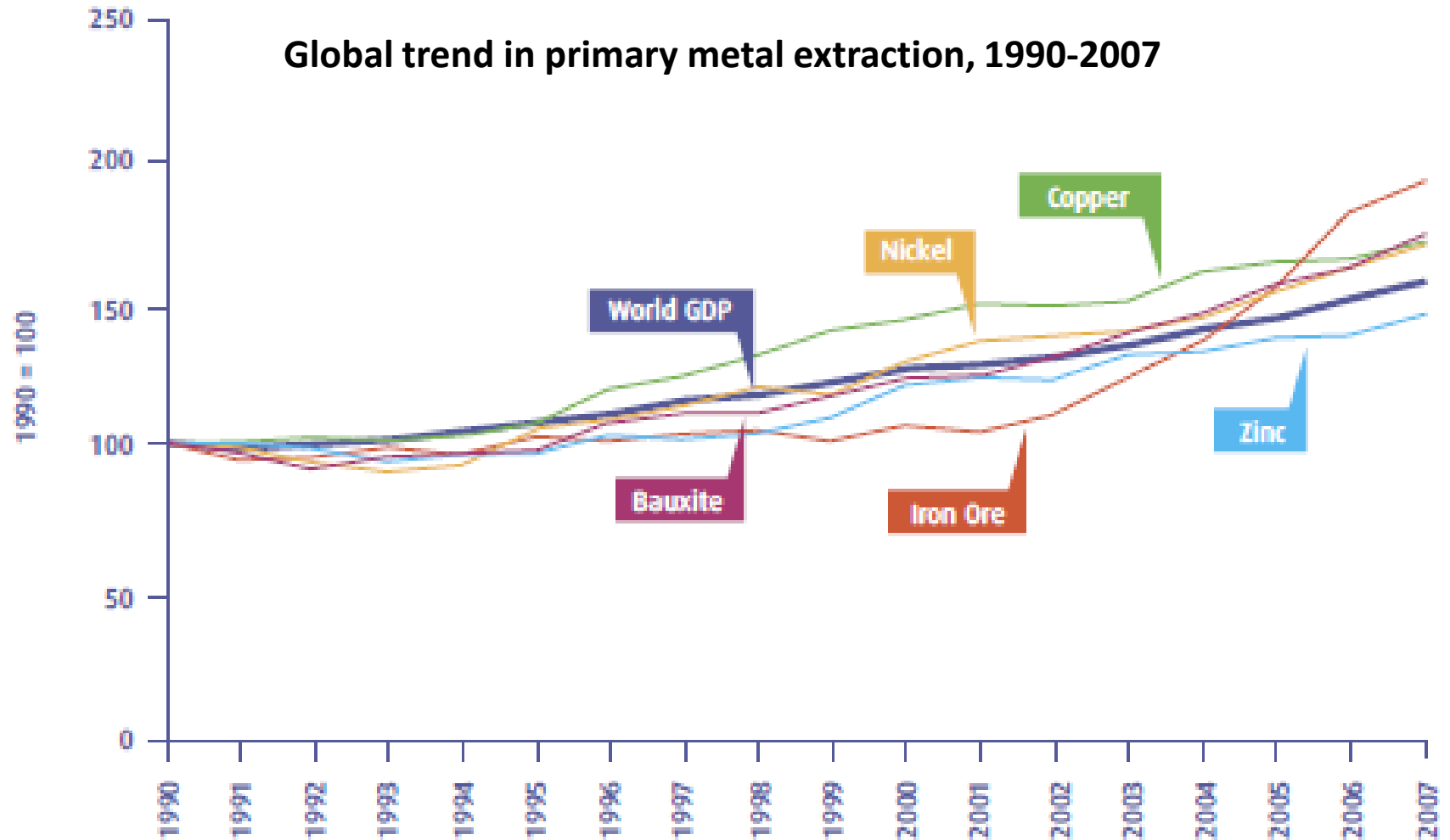
The decoupling HYPOTHESIS



No one knows whether sufficient decoupling can actually be achieved

- The drastic changes needed
- The urgency
- The lock-ins of the existing socio-technical systems

No sign of decoupling – the example of metals



Towards a Green Economy – Key Messages

グリーン経済

- We should recognize that **relying on decoupling** as the key strategy towards a Green Economy (assuming that continued economic growth – also in rich countries – is environmentally sustainable) **is a gamble**
- We need to be open to the possibility that **developed countries may have to cut down** their material consumption drastically and possibly also stabilizing or reducing their economic activity
- It is imperative that developing countries **learn from the mistakes made by the rich countries** and do not mimic their patterns of consumption and production
- **Developing countries need to form their own unique development pathways**, which can bring prosperity and quality of life to all their citizens while keeping within the ecological boundaries of the Earth