PHIL 224
**Environmental Ethics, Week 11**
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- Use of laptops (tablets, etc.) is discouraged, and limited to the last two rows.

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## Responsibilities of mining companies

1. Bargain fairly with voluntary stakeholders.
2. Consider consequences for involuntary stakeholders.
3. Distinguish between voluntary and involuntary stakeholders.
4. Support a fair distribution for all stakeholders. Mitigate (reduce) risk. Fair compensation for costs. Fair distribution of benefits.
5. Avoid impacts on stakeholders from which recovery is difficult.

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## Questions about responsibilities

1. Is the environment itself a stakeholder? No: social issues.
2. Are the five responsibilities adequate for settling issues?
3. Will the five responsibilities have any practical effect?

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## Why ethical mining is rare

1. Companies interpret responsibilities narrowly to legal ones.
2. Companies weigh risks for stockholders, not everyone affected.
3. Companies shape public opinion.
4. Companies don't anticipate public reactions based on fairness.

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## Approaches to environmental decisions

Conventional: technical, information-based, case-specific

Alternative: precaution, democratic, anticipatory, value-based

Precautionary principle: If an action or policy has a suspected risk of causing harm to the public or to the environment, and there is no scientific consensus that the action or policy is harmful, then the burden of proof that it is not harmful falls on those taking the action.

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## New Life Forms

Positive consequences: greater yields, prosperity, jobs.

Negative consequences:

1. Biodiversity losses
2. Patenting of seeds
3. Dominance of corporations
4. Ecological disruptions from escaped organisms
5. Human identity threats from reductionism and DNA manipulation

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## Regulatory approach deficiencies

Inadequate information for risk calculation.

Risk acceptability is a matter of values, not science.

Risk assessment misses overall and cumulative effects.

Risk assessment of products comes too late.

Neglect of distributional effects.

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## Alternative Regulatory Process

1. Comprehensive assessment of a new biotechnology.
   - Examine needs and benefits.
   - Identify possible effects.
   - Assess alternative means.
   - Propose set of principles.
2. Develop a precautionary screen.
   - Apply precautionary and value principles.
   - Examine questionable product types.
3. Evaluate specific products.

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## Basic value principles

- Continued existence of nature. Protect ecosystems, diversity, genetic material.
- Cultural sustainability.
- Open political process.
- Freedom from want and economic vulnerability. Needs, distribution, self-reliance.

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## Methods of settling ethical issues (Brook)

Identify problems and collect facts.

Identify relevant ethical principles.

Lay out criteria for costs and benefits.

Apply the principles and criteria to the facts.

Application: is nuclear power ethical?

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## Relevant Principles

1. Fairness: those who benefit should bear the costs.
2. Liberty: infringe on people's lives as little as possible.
3. Equal worth: all people have same value.

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## Deep geological disposal of wastes

- Achieves fairness and protects future liberty.
- Has wide scope in protecting across beings, time, space.
- Discounts future generations less.
- Costs paid by those who benefit.
- Reduces risks and uncertainty.

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