

Overview of Sustainable Development Policy and Practice

How the world and the UN have developed new views on the environment and sustainability

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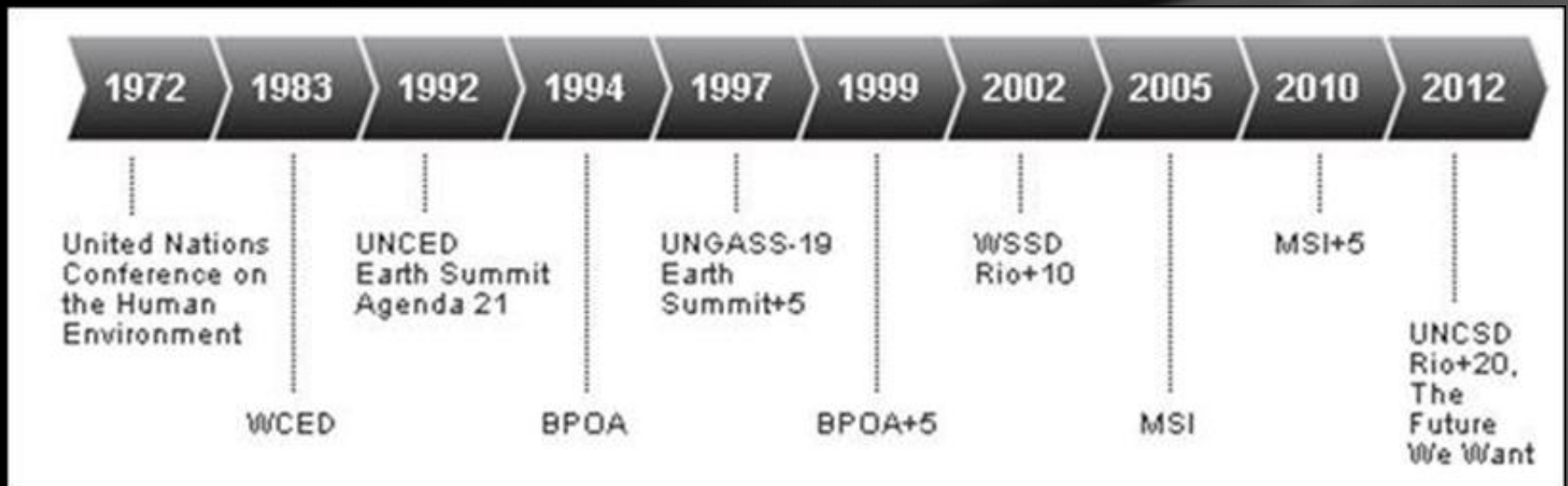
Part 1. Development of
Inter-governmental
Cooperation

Part 2. Sustainability
policy and practice



Development of Inter-governmental Cooperation

- Since the adoption of the UN Charter in 1945, the organization has been heavily focused on peace, human rights, and international cooperation.
- In 1972, the UN expanded their focus to the environment and sustainability.
- Multiple summits and conferences have been help to promote the inter-governmental process on the environment and sustainability.



United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972)



- In 1972, the UN organized a Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden that resulted in the development of the UN Environmental Programme.
- Widespread industrialization, the early phases of modern globalization, and destruction of ecosystems was of paramount international concern.
- First Earth Day in 1970, at this time local and national governments started making a push to protect the environment.
- The first international meeting of countries that addressed the impacts of global environmental degradation and its causes.
- Provided a framework for addressing these issues and suggested policies, educational approaches, and national strategies
- Environmental Programme has worked on a variety of issues identified in the Stockholm report.

Stockholm Summit 1972

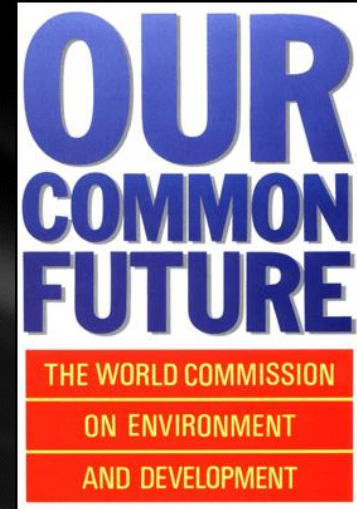
United Nations Summit on the Human Environment



United Nations Environment Programme
Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement



World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1983)



- In 1983, the UN established a Commission on Environment and Development, often called the Brundtland Commission to look more deeply at environmental problems and their causes.
- Gro Harlem Brundtland, the former Prime Minister of Norway was the Chair of the Commission
- Brundtland Report
 - To propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development by the year 2000 and beyond
 - To recommend ways concern for the environment may be translated into greater co-operation among developing countries and between countries at different stages of economic and social development
 - to consider ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environment concerns; and
 - to help define shared perceptions of long-term environmental issues and the appropriate efforts needed to deal successfully with the problems of protecting and enhancing the environment

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and Other Outcomes from the Bruntland Report

- UNCED (1992): Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (local sustainable development (not national...city/state level), **the Framework Convention on Climate Change**, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Convention to Combat Desertification.
- Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) (1994): The UN recognized that small island states have unique problems associated with sustainability: they are exposed to unique hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and global climate change; they have limited resources such as fresh water; and they often have trade or economic challenges.
- UN General Assembly Special Session 19 (UNGASS) (1997): This General Assembly met in 1997 to review the progress of Agenda 21. The report of the session notes that there were a number of problems associated with the implementation and overall success of the plan.
 - Plan needed to be more specific with better goals. Globalization proved to be a greater challenge than imagined.

Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Sustainability in the 21st Century

- In 2000, the UN hosted a Millennium Summit to discuss the role of the UN in the coming century.
- Millennium Goals were established with specific targets:
 1. Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger
 2. Achieving universal primary education
 3. Promoting gender equality and empowering women
 4. Reducing child mortality rates
 5. Improving maternal health
 6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases
 7. Ensuring environmental sustainability
 8. Developing a global partnership for development
- The MDG's are regularly evaluated and report cards by countries and region have been created.

Sustainability in the 21st Century



- World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) (2002): There were several outcomes including the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, including national assessment reporting by countries. Updated the Bruntland Report and Agenda 21 on problems associated with globalization, income disparity, and multinational cooperation.
- UN Conference on Sustainable Development (CSD) (Rio+20) (2012): The outcome report, called *The Future We Want*, details a number of key initiatives. One of the results of the effort was a call for strengthening participation of all countries in international sustainable development processes. Decision from member states to set up an intergovernmental process to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) along with targets and indicators
- Leading up to the Rio+20 conference, the CSD held annual sessions (CSD1 through CSD19) where nations have participated in policy programmes of the CSD.

Now....

The UN is working on developing international sustainable development goals and finding areas of commonality for international sustainability efforts

Also working on developing regional goals/targets and encouraging innovation



Sustainability Policy and Practice

- Highly variable approaches around the world
 - Developed v. developing
 - Dry v. wet
 - Island v. continental
 - Coastal v. interior
 - Cold v. warm
 - Low population v. high population
 - Agricultural v. industrial
 - Urban v. rural



National Policies

Table 2.1. Summary of national sustainable development documents, by region

Regions	Number of Nations with Documents Posted to the UN					Total Number of UN Nations
	SD Indicator Profiles ¹	SD Strategy Profiles ¹	CSD National Reports ¹	MDG Progress Reports ²	Rio+20 National Assessments ³	
Developed	25	28	29	50	4	50
Northern Africa	1	1	1	5	2	5
Sub-Saharan Africa	7	6	8	47	34	47
South-Eastern Asia	1	1	1	11	4	11
Eastern Asia	2	2	3	4	0	4
Southern Asia	0	0	1	8	4	8
Western Asia	1	2	2	13	3	13
Caucasus and Central Asia	0	0	1	8	3	8
Oceania	2	2	2	13	1	13
Latin America and the Caribbean	4	5	8	34	14	34
Totals	43	47	56	193	69	193

No agreed upon way of “doing”
sustainability at the national level



Distributive: US: No Department of Sustainability

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Department of Health and Human Services

Department of Justice

Department of the Interior

Department of Agriculture

Department of Commerce

Department of Labor

Department of Transportation

Department of Energy

Department of Education



Centralized: Canadian Well Being Index

Example Indicator:

Leisure and Culture

Average percentage of time spent on the previous day in social leisure activities

Average percentage of time spent on the previous day in arts and culture activities

Average number of hours in the past year volunteering for culture and recreation organizations

Average monthly frequency of participation in physical activity lasting over 15 minutes

Average attendance per performance in past year at all performing arts performances

Average visitation per site in past year to all National Parks and National Historic Sites

Average number of nights away per trip in the past year on vacation trips to destinations over 80km from home

Expenditures in past year on culture and recreation as a percent of total expenditures

Centralized: Morocco

Table 2.10. List of Moroccan Sustainability Indicators

Population and Society	Planning and Land Use	Economic Measures	Environmental Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population growth • Fertility rate • Percent below poverty line • Women as a percent of workforce • Employment rate • Illiteracy rate • School enrollment • Percent of budget spent on vocational training • State spending on education • State spending on conservation and cultural heritage • Life expectancy at birth • Infant mortality • Access to clean drinking water • Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births • Mortality due to waterborne and infectious diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of agricultural land due to urbanization • Percentage slums • Urbanization rate • Area of green space per capita • Rate of achievement of integrated programs in rural areas • Total area of forest lost annually • Forest area and afforestation rate • Rate of reforestation • Population density in coastal areas • Coastal erosion • Areas of coastal preserve • Oil tanker traffic • Coastal water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP by sector • Per capita GDP • Foreign direct investment • External debt/GDP • Fertilizer and pesticide use per hectare • Percent irrigated farmland • Percent pastoral land use • Value and volume of fish products • Industrial waste water • Number of restored mines and quarries • Number and size of large supermarkets • Energy balance by source • Share of renewable energy resources • Structure, volume, and rate of increase in transport mode • Number of tourist nights per 100 inhabitants • Number of hotel beds per 100 inhabitants • Number of international tourists per 100 inhabitants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual water use • Index of water quality • Sewage access • Siltation of dams • Areas impacted by soil erosion, salinity, and desertification • Changes in land use • Protected areas • Species threatened with extinction • Management of solid waste • Greenhouse gas emissions • Sulfur and nitrogen oxides pollution • Use of ozone depleting chemicals • Accidence of limits for ozone, SO₂, NO₂, and lead • Flooded areas • Number of organizations focused on the environment or sustainable development • Public expenditure on environmental protection as % of GDP • Existence of national environmental plans and strategies for sustainable development • Number of Agenda 21 communities

Centralized: China

Table 2.8. List of Chinese Indicators for Assessing Sustainable Development Capacity

<p>Subsistence Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land resource index • Water resource index • Climate resource index • Biological resource index • Agro-investment index • Agro-capacity index • Agro-efficiency index • Rural production stability index • Subsistence sustainability index 	<p>Development Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological response cost index • Economic openness index • Human capital index • Basic infrastructure index • Economic scale index • Economic potential index • Economic structure index • Industrial profitability index • Business operation efficiency • Product quality index • Economic clusterization index 	<p>Environment Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emission and waste intensity index • Atmosphere pollution index • Water pollution index • Geography fragility index • Climate change index (frequency of natural disaster etc.) • Land degradation index • Environmental management index • Ecological protection index
<p>Social Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population development index • Social structure index • Living standard index • Social fairness index • Social security index • Social protection index • Society literacy index • Society innovation capacity index 	<p>Human Capital and Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education investment index • Education scale index • Education achievement index (change of adult literacy, ratio of colleague graduates ect.) • Technology resources index • Research and innovation output index • Index of resource efficiency as the result of technology • Local government efficiency index • Economic and social adjustment index • Environment management index 	

Lessons Learned

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Key themes: environment, benchmarking, energy and global climate change.

Important, but not universal themes: conflict and war, disasters, equity, and economic development.

Concerns

Moving national goals to regional or local levels.

Data collection, standardization, and management.

Lack of institutions to manage process.

Lack of national experts.



Final thoughts

Sustainability is formally defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.



Final thoughts

But the experiences with sustainability vary. Not everyone envisions the same future. We have to understand that there are geographic variations in sustainability needs and expectations.



Final thoughts

The United Nations can assist with the maturation of sustainable development by encouraging conversations on this variability to assist in the development of ways to assess global sustainability that accounts for particular national or regional needs while promoting global sustainability.



Thank you!

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