



## DVA 1501 - Assignment 3

Development Studies (University of South Africa)



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## **Introduction to sustainable development:**

Sustainable development aims to balance the social, economic, and environmental needs of present and future generations while preserving the natural environment.

### **Key Goals and Values:**

Recognition of the instrumental value of a healthy natural environment, including biodiversity. Protection and appreciation of the needs of Indigenous cultures. Cultivation of economic and social equity worldwide. Responsible and transparent implementation of government policies.

**Historical Roots:** The concept of sustainable development emerged from the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (the Stockholm Conference). The influential Brundtland Report (1987) defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs.

Sustainable development is about harmonizing progress with planetary well-being, ensuring that our actions today do not jeopardize the well-being of future generations. It is a delicate dance between human aspirations and the Earth's capacity to support life.

## **History of sustainable development:**

- **1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference):**

The first principles of what later became known as sustainable development were laid out at this conference. Although the term "sustainable development" was not explicitly used, the international community agreed that both development and the environment could be managed in a mutually beneficial way. This recognition set the stage for future discussions and actions.

- **1987 Brundtland Report (Our Common Future):**

Sponsored by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, this report introduced the concept of sustainable development. It defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The report highlighted the urgent need to address environmental degradation and the unsustainability of unchecked growth and development. Key works that influenced this thinking included Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Garret Hardin's *Tragedy of the Commons*, and the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* report.

- **1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro):**

Marked the first international attempt to draw up action plans and strategies for moving towards a more sustainable pattern of development. Over one hundred Heads of State and representatives from 178 national governments attended. Sustainable development gained major recognition, and the classic definition emerged: “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Rio Summit solidified sustainable development as a major global challenge.

- **2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg):**

Assessed progress since the Rio Summit. Key outcomes included a political declaration, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and various partnership initiatives. Commitments were made in areas such as sustainable consumption and production, water and sanitation, and energy.

- **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:**

Adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, this agenda provides a shared blueprint for peace, prosperity, and sustainability. At its core are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as an urgent call to action for all countries. These goals recognize that ending poverty, improving health and education, reducing inequality, and spurring economic growth must go together with tackling climate change and preserving our oceans and forests<sup>1</sup>.

## **What is sustainable development?**

Sustainable development is a process that creates growth and progress through the addition of physical, economic, environmental, and social components to improve quality of life without damaging the resources of the environment. Simply put, sustainable development is a way for people to use resources without the resources running out.

It involves finding a balance between economic development, environmental protection, and social well-being. It aims to balance the needs of present and future human generations while also preserving or preventing undue damage to the natural environment. Sustainable development strives for a world where progress is achieved without jeopardizing the well-being of future generations or harming our planet’s natural systems.

# **Sustainable development encompasses three interconnected pillars:**

## **Environmental Sustainability:**

This pillar focuses on preserving our planet's natural resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity. Key aspects include:

- **Conservation:** Protecting forests, oceans, and wildlife habitats to maintain ecological balance.
- **Renewable Energy:** Promoting clean energy sources like solar, wind, and hydropower.
- **Waste Reduction:** Minimizing waste generation and promoting recycling.
- **Climate Action:** Addressing climate change through emissions reduction and adaptation strategies.

## **Social Sustainability:**

Social sustainability emphasizes the well-being of people and communities. It involves:

- **Equity and Justice:** Ensuring fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and benefits.
- **Health and Education:** Prioritizing access to quality healthcare and education.
- **Social Inclusion:** Fostering a sense of belonging and equal participation for all.
- **Community Resilience:** Strengthening communities to withstand shocks and adapt to change.

## **Economic Sustainability:**

Economic sustainability focuses on long-term prosperity and financial stability. Key components include:

- **Job Creation:** Promoting employment opportunities and decent work conditions.
- **Profitability:** Balancing economic growth with ethical practices.
- **Resource Accounting:** Properly valuing ecosystem services and considering environmental costs.
- **Innovation:** Encouraging sustainable business models and technologies

# **Various approaches to sustainability and environmentalism:**

## **Key Goals and Values:**

- **Environmental Conservation:** Protecting ecosystems, forests, and wildlife habitats.
- **Renewable Energy:** Promoting clean energy sources.
- **Waste Reduction:** Minimizing waste generation and promoting recycling.
- **Social Equity:** Ensuring fair distribution of resources and opportunities.
- **Transparent Governance:** Responsible implementation of policies.
- **Transparency:** Implementing government policies transparently and responsibly.

- **Origins:** The concept emerged from 20th-century conservation movements and the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. 'The Brundtland Report (1987) defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs''.

## **Ecocentrism:**

Ecocentrism places ecosystems and the natural world at the centre of concern. It is the values based on ecology. Ecocentrism is a philosophy that places intrinsic value on all living organisms and their natural environment, regardless of their perceived usefulness or importance to human beings. This approach focuses on the biodiversity of the world and how we, as human jeopardizes the environment.

Examples:

- **Ecosystem Services:** Recognizing the value of services provided by ecosystems (e.g., pollination, water purification).
- **Strong Sustainability:** Prioritizing ecological integrity over economic growth.
- **Education for Sustainable Development:** Promoting ecological literacy.
- **New Conservation:** Advocating for ecosystem protection.
- **The Ecological Citizen, Issue I 2017**

## **Structural, Systemic, and Enabling Approaches:**

- **Structural:** Addressing fundamental structural changes (e.g., economic systems, power relations).  
Focus: These approaches target fundamental changes in the foundations of politics, economy, and society.  
Objective: Restructure the underlying systems and structures that shape our world.  
Analogy: Imagine reshaping the bedrock upon which our systems operate.
- **Systemic:** Focusing on systemic shifts (e.g., governance, institutions)  
Focus: Systemic approaches zoom in on specific features of systems.  
Objective: Bring about targeted, instrumental change within these specific aspects.  
Analogy: Adjusting the gears of a complex machine to optimize its performance.
- **Enabling:** Creating conditions that facilitate change (e.g., education, innovation)  
Focus: Emphasize agency and uncertainty.  
Objective: Empower individuals and communities to shape the trajectory of change.  
Analogy: A compass guiding us through uncharted waters.

# Discussion on approaches that I subscribe to and an explanation why I support the chosen approaches:

## 1. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

Approach: The SDGs, established by the United Nations, provide a comprehensive framework for global development. They address interconnected challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation.

### Reasons to Support:

- Holistic Approach: The SDGs consider social, economic, and environmental dimensions simultaneously, emphasizing the need for balance.
- Global Collaboration: By rallying countries, organizations, and individuals around common goals, the SDGs foster international cooperation.
- Long-Term Vision: The focus on future generations ensures sustainable practices.
- Measurable Targets: Each goal has specific targets, allowing progress tracking.

## 2. Circular Economy:

Approach: The circular economy aims to minimize waste and maximize resource efficiency. It promotes recycling, reusing, and designing products for longevity.

### Reasons to Support:

- Resource Conservation: By closing material loops, we reduce reliance on finite resources.
- Economic Benefits: Circular practices can create jobs, stimulate innovation, and enhance economic resilience.
- Environmental Impact: It reduces pollution, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions.

## 3. Localism and Resilience:

Approach: Focusing on local communities, economies, and ecosystems. It emphasizes self-reliance, diversity, and adaptability.

### Reasons to Support:

- Community Empowerment: Local solutions empower communities to address their unique challenges.
- Reduced Dependency: Local production and consumption reduce reliance on distant resources.
- Resilience: Diverse local systems are more resilient to shocks (e.g., climate events, supply chain disruptions).
- Cultural Preservation: Celebrating local traditions and knowledge.



## Key arguments for sustainable development:

**Balancing Needs:** Sustainable development seeks to balance the immediate needs of people with long-term environmental preservation. It recognizes that economic growth and social progress must coexist with ecological well-being.

**Biodiversity:** A healthy natural environment, including diverse ecosystems and species, is essential for human survival. Sustainable development emphasizes the importance of preserving biodiversity.

**Equity:** Sustainability aims for global equity, ensuring that all people have access to resources, education, and opportunities. It addresses social inequalities and promotes justice.

**Transparency:** Transparent governance and responsible policies are crucial. Sustainable development requires collaboration among governments, organizations, and individuals.

**Holistic Approach:** The concept considers social, economic, and environmental dimensions simultaneously. It emphasizes meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs.

## Conclusion:

In conclusion, sustainable development is not just an environmental goal; it is a comprehensive vision that integrates economic prosperity, social well-being, and ecological health. By adopting sustainable practices, we can create a better world for ourselves and generations to come. In the concept of politics in terms of development, is that the developed countries are powerful compared to developing countries of the South. However, the development in made in the places where these above discussed theories and measured are difficult to maintain.

## List of references:

1. Brodhag, C., & Taliere, S. (2006). Sustainable development strategies: Tools for policy coherence. Natural Resources Forum.
2. Ndlovu S, Ndlovu M, Makhubedu K, Sentime K, Maphosa B, Mazibuko S, Du Pleassis G and Zulu N. (2017) Only study guide for DVA1501 – Introduction to Development Studie. Pretoria: University of South Africa
3. Origins: The concept emerged from 20th-century conservation movements and the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. 'The Brundtland Report (1987) defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs''.
4. Rebecca M. Kulik- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

## **ADDENDUM**

### **ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST**

Complete this checklist and attach it to your essay-type assignment.

**Answer all the questions by putting a cross/tick in the appropriate column.**

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>YES</b>
1. Have I included a table of contents?	X
2. Does my assignment consist of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• an introduction?</li><li>• a main section (or body) with appropriate subheadings?</li><li>• a conclusion?</li></ul>	X X X
3. Have I included a list of references that complies with the following requirements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I have listed all the sources to which I referred.</li><li>• I have provided full details according to the guidelines given in Tutorial Letter DVAALLD/301.</li><li>• I have listed the sources alphabetically.</li></ul>	X X X
4. Have I used references to acknowledge all the sources from which I have borrowed ideas?	X
5. Did I write in my own words to avoid plagiarism?	X
6. Have I checked to see whether all my sentences are arranged in a logical order so that my lecturer will be able to follow my arguments?	X
7. Did I limit my assignment to the number of words or pages stipulated in the assignment question?	X
8. Have I written my full particulars on the title page?	X
9. Have I written the correct assignment number on the title page?	X

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