

The Concept of Sustainability



Key Points

- Understanding the development of the concept of sustainability
- Understanding the interconnectedness of the three dimensions of the TBL

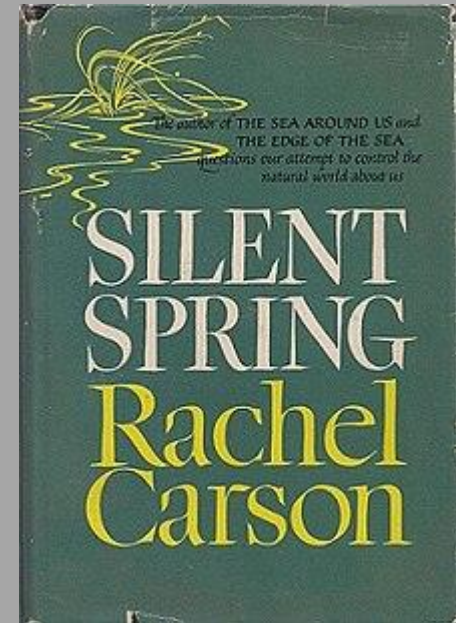
Sustainability and UN

Development of the Concept

History of Sustainable Development in UN

(UNCSD; <http://www.uncsd2012.org/history.html>;
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/resourcelibrary>)

- **1960s – rising awareness of the environmental degradation**
- **1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment**
 - [Stockholm Declaration](#)
 - the ‘rights’ of the human family to a healthy and productive environment.
 - **1980** Creation of Union for the Conservation of Natural Resources (IUCN) → the World Conservation Strategy (WCS)
- **1982 the World Charter for Nature**
 - WCS initiative
 - "mankind is a part of nature and life depends on the uninterrupted functioning of natural systems".



... UN ...

- 1983 the **World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)** created
 - to formulate ‘A global agenda for change’
 - 1987, Our Common Future (Brundtland Report)
 - Sustainable development:
 - “is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Our Common Future, Ch.2, 1)

. . . UN . . .

- **1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)**
 - Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
 - Agenda 21: A Programme of Action for Sustainable Development
 - Agreements were also reached on
 - the Convention on Biological Diversity and
 - the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) → Kyoto Protocol (1997)
- 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Johannesburg
 - Johannesburg declaration
 - Johannesburg plan of implementation
- 2012 Rio+20
 - The Future We Want
 - Green Economy

... UN

- **2015 - 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**
 - <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>
 - 17 sustainable development goals
 - 169 targets
 - Agreed by all countries
- **2016 – Paris Agreement on Climate Change**
- https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTcxNjE5MzU4NA==.html?spm=a2hok.11417342.soreults.dtitle
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2018/09/united-nations-thomas-friends-launch-sdg-collaboration/>



(Click above image to download pdf from UN)

2030 Agenda for SD

17 Goals . . .

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

... 17 Goals

- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Our Common Future

<http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>

What is the problem?

- Symptoms and Causes (from *Our Common Future*)
 - The earth is one but the world is not
 - “Some consume the Earth’s resources at a rate that would leave little for future generations. Others, consume far too little and live with the prospect of hunger, squalor, disease, and early death.”
- Environmental damages
 - Rich: Growing demand on scarce resources and the pollution
 - Poor: Destroying immediate environment in order to survive
 - Economic model based on
 - Consumption of increasing amounts of resources
 - Creation of pollution

Symptoms and causes 1:

Poverty

- Poverty and the vicious cycle. . .
 - “There are more hungry people in the world today than ever before in human history”
 - Forcing people to overuse natural environment to survive (e.g. deforestation) → Environmental degradation → ‘natural’ disasters
 - Unhealthy and dangerous environment (lack of clean water and sanitation) → reducing human capital
 - + Lacking ability to regulate

Symptoms and causes 2:

Growth

- Uneven growth

Table 1-2 Distribution of World Consumption, Averages for 1980-83					
		Developed Countries (26% of population)		Developing Countries (74% of population)	
	Units of Per Capita Consumption	Share in World Consumption		Share in World Consumption	
Commodity		per cent	per capita	per cent	per capita
Food					
Calories	kcal/day	34	3,395	66	2,389
Protein	gms/day	38	99	62	
Fat	gms/day	53	127	47	40
Paper	kg/year	85	123	15	8
Steel	kg/year	79	459	21	41
Other Metals	kg/year	86	26	14	2
Commercial Energy	/year	80		20	0.5
Source: WCED estimates based on country-level data from FAO, UN Statistical Office, UNCTAD and American Metals Association					

(Our Common Future, 1987 Chapter2, 2)

Symptoms and causes 3:

Survival

- Industrial system (and technology) is endangering the basic integrity of the nature. . .
 - Global warming
 - Depletion of ozone
 - Pollutants
 - Toxic wastes
 - Desertification
 - Loss of forests and wild lands → reducing genetic diversity

Symptom and causes 4:

Economic Crisis

- In the 1980s
 - Slowing economic growth
 - Fall in commodity prices
 - Increasing debts in Latin America and Africa
 - Poor people suffered the most
 - Decreasing multilateralism

New Approaches:

Bringing people, nature and everything back into development. . .

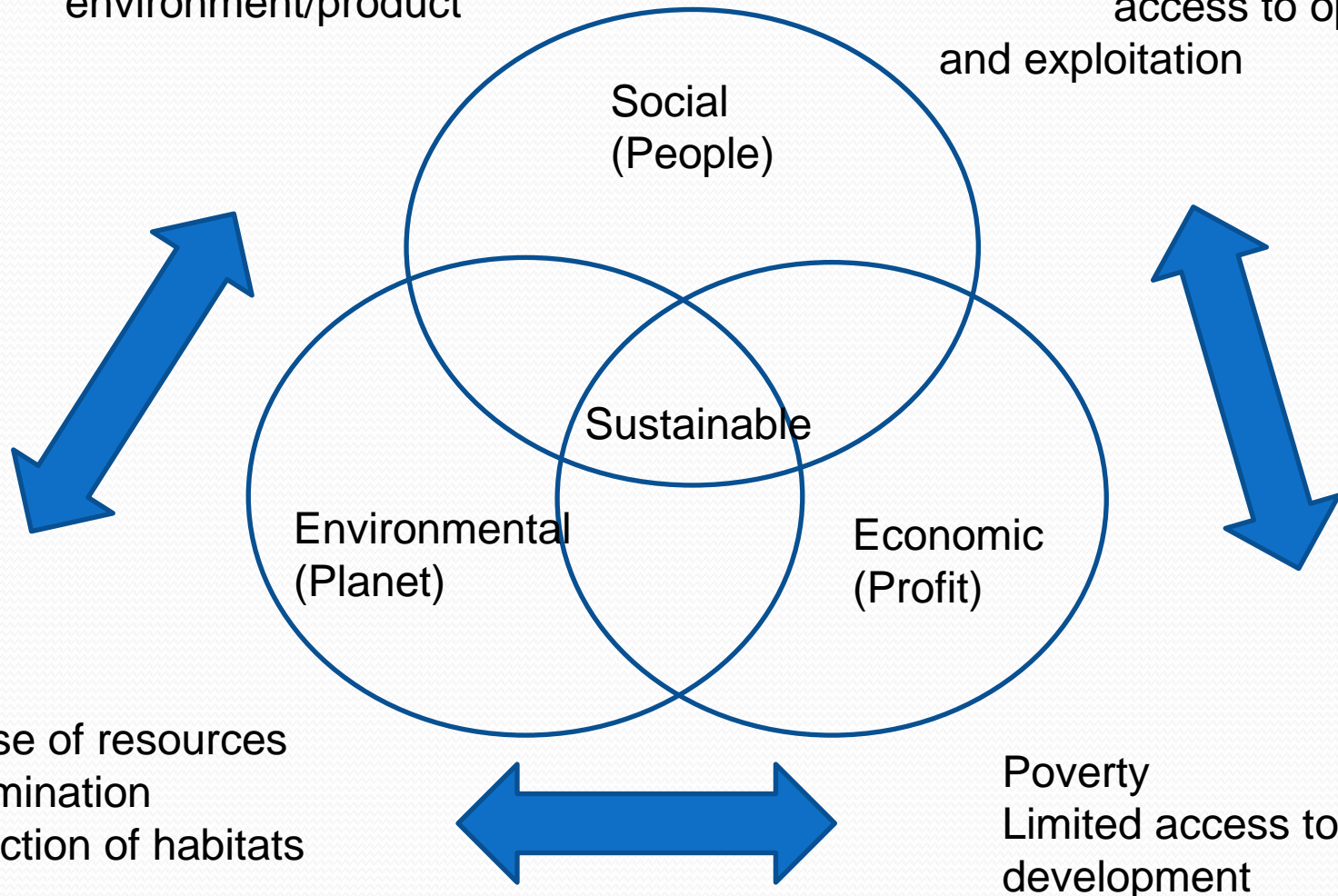
- “Environment and development are not separate challenges; they are inexorably linked.”
- “Development cannot subsist upon a deteriorating environmental resource base; the environment cannot be protected when growth leaves out of account the costs of environmental destruction.” (*Our Common Future*)
- “the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment are the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialised countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances.” (Agenda 21)
- “Economic model pioneered by today’s industrial countries is not viable for the world as a whole” (Albino 2013, 1)

Sustainability

For present and future . . .

Unequal access to
productive,
healthful
environment/product

Inequality
income
gender
access to opportunity
and exploitation



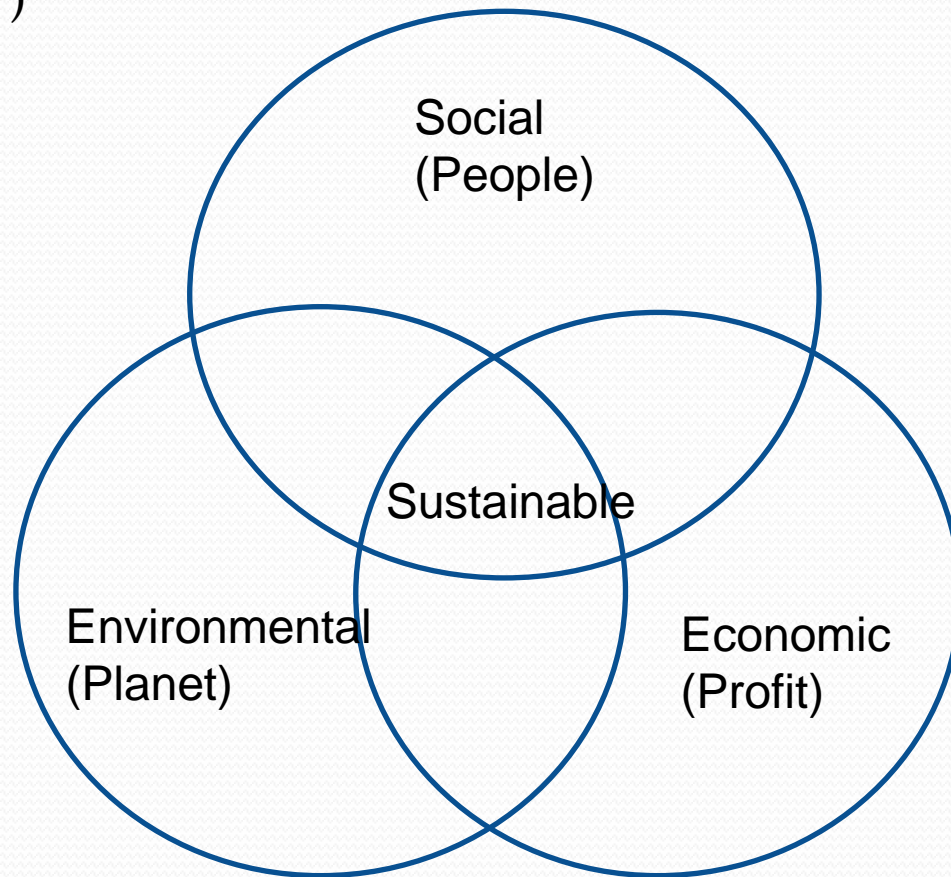
Overuse of resources
Contamination
Destruction of habitats

Poverty
Limited access to
development

It's a vision for the future

See

(https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTI3OTM4NzM3Ng==.html?spm=a2hok.11417342.soreults.dtitle)



(Dreo 2006; found in Young and Dhanda 2013, 18)

Can this be achieved by current economic model based on corporations?

Week 2: Understanding corporation

- What are the characteristics of contemporary business corporations that make them, at least to some observers, inherently unsustainable?
- What examples of “corporate crimes” can you find on news today? Which areas of TBL is it affecting?
- * **“Corporation as Psychopath” *Encyclopedia of Corporate Social Responsibility* (accessed through Springer Link)**
- *Corporation* (2005, DVD) – a film by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan

Week 3: Understanding what corporation can do

... And your case study