



*Sustainable Development: A
Brief History*



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Development (post World War II)

PROGRESS:

- Peace & security*
- Economic
Development*
- Social Development/
Human Rights*
- Supportive National
Governance*

PRICE OF

PROGRESS:

- Environment &
Natural Resources*



Purposes of Development

- ✧ Human Wellbeing
- ✧ Quality of Life
- ✧ Freedom
- ✧ Opportunity





In the 1970s and 1980s....

✧ Problems:

- ✧ Widespread poverty*
- ✧ Growing environmental degradation*

✧ Systematic causes:

- ✧ Increasing consumption of resources*
- ✧ Population growth*



IUCN World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development (1980)

- ✧ *Sustainable development: “integration of conservation and development”*
- ✧ *Conservation: “management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations.”*

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)

- ✧ *Created by 1983 U.N. General Assembly resolution*
- ✧ *Iconic definition of sustainable development:
“development that meets the needs of the present
without compromising the ability of future generations
to meet their own needs.”*
- ✧ *Described “a threatened future”*
- ✧ *Called on U.N. General Assembly to
“transform this report” into a global
plan of action for sustainable
development*





United Nations Conference on Environment and Development--1992

- ✧ At Rio de Janeiro “Earth Summit,” nations of the world endorsed sustainable development
 - ✧ Agenda 21—comprehensive action plan
 - ✧ Rio Declaration—statement of principles
 - ✧ Forest Action Plan
 - ✧ United States participated actively and agreed



The image shows the cover of the Agenda 21 document. It features a yellow and orange background with the text 'EARTH SUMMIT' at the top, 'AGENDA 21' in large green letters in the center, and 'THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME OF ACTION FROM RIO' at the bottom. There are also two small circular logos at the bottom left.

EARTH SUMMIT
AGENDA
21
THE UNITED NATIONS
PROGRAMME OF ACTION
FROM RIO

Agenda 21

- ✧ Four sections, 40 chapters:
 - ✧ I. Social and Economic Dimensions
 - ✧ II. Conservation and Management of Resources for Development
 - ✧ III. Strengthening the Role of Major Groups
 - ✧ IV. Means of Implementation



Rio Declaration principles

- ✧ 27 principles for sustainable development, including:
 - ✧ Integrated decision-making
 - ✧ Precautionary approach
 - ✧ Intergenerational equity
 - ✧ Necessity of reducing and eliminating “unsustainable patterns of production and consumption” and adopting “appropriate demographic policies”



Additional principles

- ✧ Public participation, public information, and access to justice
- ✧ Internalization of environmental costs
- ✧ Environmental issues best handled “at the relevant level” of government
- ✧ “Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible”

Sustainable Development

PROGRESS:

- Peace & security*
- Economic development*
- Social development/human rights*
- Environmental protection/restoration*
- Supportive national governance*





Functionally, sustainable development is:

✧ *Development that--*

✧ *Protects and restores the environment.*

✧ *Eliminates and prevents large-scale poverty.*

✧ *Or: Ecologically sustainable human development*

Purposes of sustainable development

✧ *Development—*

- ✧ Human Wellbeing
- ✧ Quality of Life
- ✧ Freedom
- ✧ Opportunity

✧ *Sustainable Development—*

- ✧ Human wellbeing
- ✧ Quality of life
- ✧ Freedom
- ✧ Opportunity



For this and future generations

Subsequent Commitments

- ✧ Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (U.N. General Assembly, 1997)
- ✧ Millennium Declaration (U.N. General Assembly, 2000)
- ✧ Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002)

and coming soon....

✧ U.N. Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio de Janeiro, May 2012





*As we approach the 20th
anniversary of the Earth Summit:*

- ✧ Sustainable development has become the generally recognized international framework for maintaining and improving the human condition.

U.S. Efforts

- ✧ National sustainability efforts continue to be a significant challenge—in all countries.



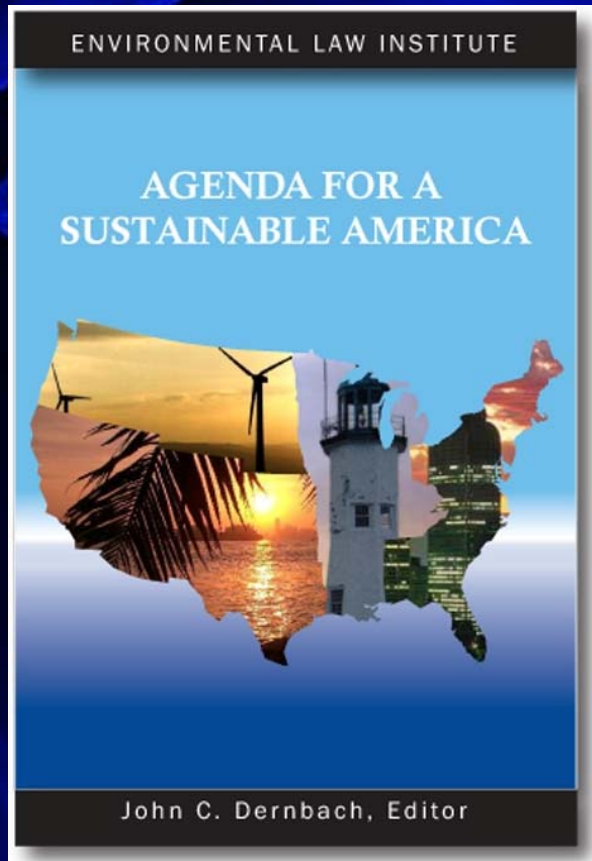


President's Council on Sustainable Development (1993-1999)

- ✧ Primary Report: *Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the Future (1996)*
- ✧ *Many recommendations; not a national strategy*
- ✧ *"A sustainable United States will have a growing economy that provides equitable opportunities for satisfying livelihoods and a safe, healthy, high quality of life for current and future generations."*



Nongovernmental reviews of national sustainability efforts



- ✧ There is one such comprehensive project in the United States.

Project Overview

- ✧ Evaluation of U.S. activities
- ✧ Recommendations for near-term future actions (next 5-10 years)
- ✧ One article: with seminar students (1997)
- ✧ Two books:
 - ✧ *Stumbling Toward Sustainability* (2002) (U.S. actions between 1992 and 2002)
 - ✧ *Agenda for a Sustainable America* (January 2009) (U.S. actions since 2002)





28 Chapters Covering Diversity of Topics

- ✧ Consumption, population, and poverty
- ✧ Conservation and management of natural resources
- ✧ Waste and toxic chemicals
- ✧ Land use and transportation
- ✧ International trade, finance, and development assistance
- ✧ Education
- ✧ Local, state, and national governance



Report Card: Bad News

- ✧ U.S. generally moving in the wrong direction on a variety of issues.
- ✧ U.S. has, for example, an enormous ecological footprint. Although the United States has less than 5 percent of the world's population, our economy accounts for more than 28 percent of the world's production of goods and services. The United States leads the world in use of natural resources, and, in most cases, in use of natural resources per capita, including fossil fuels and materials.



Report Card: Good News

- ✧ The United States is reaching a point where most decision makers understand issues within a sustainability framework, and understand why that perspective is both attractive and necessary.
- ✧ Since 2002, climate change is an important driver for sustainability for many decision makers in corporations, local governments, educational institutions, and religious organizations.
- ✧ Six areas of greater progress: local governance, brownfields redevelopment, business and industry, colleges and universities, kindergarten through 12th grade education, and religious organizations.
- ✧ Since January 2009, Obama administration has embraced sustainability through a variety of actions.



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