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What are the major features of sustainable development as per brundtland commission

This article may require copy editing for grammar, style, cohesion, tone, or spelling. You can assist by editing it. (May 2021) (Learn how and when to remove this template message) Gro Harlem Brundtland, first head of the commission. The Brundtland Commission, formerly the World Commission on Environment and Development, was a sub-organization of the United Nations that aimed to unite countries in pursuit of sustainable development. It was founded in 1983 when United Nations Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar appointed Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway, as Chairperson of the Commission. Brundtland was chosen due to her strong background in the sciences and public health. The Brundtland Commission officially dissolved in 1987 after releasing Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report. The document popularized the term "sustainable development" and won the University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award in 1991.[1] In 1988, the Center for Our Common Future started to take the place of the Commission. History Before Brundtland Ten years after the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, a number of global environmental challenges had not been adequately addressed. During the 1980s, the World Bank increasingly intervened with the economic and social policies of the Third World, most notably with the events at Bretton Woods in 1945. Neoliberalism and economic globalization dominated the political agenda of leading trading nations, led by America's Ronald Reagan and the UK's Margaret Thatcher. The underlying problem was reducing poverty in low-income countries without exacerbating global and local environmental burdens. Neither high-income Northern countries nor low-income Southern countries were willing to give up economic growth, but environmental threats ranging from pollution, acid rain, deforestation, desertification to the destruction of the ozone layer were impossible to overlook. Countries need a way to reconcile economic development with environmental protection. Views differed on several questions: Were local environmental problems the result of local developments or of a global economic system that forced low-income countries to destroy their environment? Did environmental burdens result from destructive economic growth or a lack of economic development? Would reconciling the economy and the environment require technical means, like more resource-efficient technologies, or social, political, and structural changes? The 1980 World Conservation Strategy of the International Union for Conservation of Nature was the first report that included a very brief chapter on a concept called "sustainable development". It focused on global structural changes and was not widely read. The UN initiated an independent commission, which was asked to provide an analysis of existing problems and ideas for their solution, similar to earlier commissions such as the Independent Commission on International Development Issues (Brandt Commission) and the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues (Palme Commission).[2] Establishment of the Commission In December 1983, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, asked the former Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, to create an organization independent of the UN to focus on environmental and developmental problems and solutions after an affirmation by the General Assembly resolution in the fall of 1983.[3] This new organization was the Brundtland Commission, or more formally, the World Commission on Environment and Development. The Commission was initially headed by Brundtland as Chairman and Mansour Khalid as Vice-Chairman. The organization aimed to create a united international community with shared sustainability goals by identifying sustainability problems worldwide, raising awareness about them, and suggesting solutions. In 1987, the Brundtland Commission published the first volume of "Our Common Future," its main report. The report strongly influenced the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the 2002 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. The 1983 General Assembly established the Commission with Resolution 38/161, "Process of preparation of the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond".[4] In AVRES/38/161, the General Assembly: "8. Suggests that the Special Commission, when established, should focus mainly on the following terms of reference for its work: (a) To propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development to the year 2000 and beyond; (b) To recommend ways in which 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 and lead to the achievement of common and mutually supportive objectives which take account of the interrelationships between people, resources, environment, and development; (c) To consider ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environmental concerns, in the light of the other recommendations in its report; (d) To help to define shared perceptions of long-term environmental issues and of the appropriate efforts needed to deal successfully with the problems of protecting and enhancing the environment, a long-term agenda for action during the coming decades, and aspirational goals for the world community, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the session of a special character of the Governing Council in 1982;"[4] Definition of sustainable development Main article: Sustainable development The Brundtland Report was intended to respond to the conflict between globalized economic growth and accelerating ecological degradation. This was to be achieved by redefining "economic development" in the terms of "sustainable development".[5] It is credited with crafting the most prevalent definition of sustainability.[6] "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Development The Report of the Brundtland Commission, Our Common Future, was published by Oxford University Press in 1987. The document was the culmination of a "900-day" international exercise which catalogued, analyzed, and synthesized written submissions and expert testimony from "senior government representatives, scientists and experts, research institutes, industrialists, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and the general public" held at public hearings throughout the world. The Brundtland Commission's mandate was to:"[1] re-examine the critical issues of environment and development and to formulate innovative, concrete, and realistic action proposals to deal with them; [2] strengthen international cooperation on environment and development and assess and propose new forms of cooperation that can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed change; and [3] raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of individuals, voluntary organizations, businesses, institutes, and governments" (1987: 347). Furthermore,"The Commission focused its attention on the areas of population, food security, the loss of species and genetic resources, energy, industry, and human settlements - realizing that all of these are connected and cannot be treated in isolation one from another" (1987: 27). Analysis The Commission's definition contains two main elements: the concept of "needs", in particular those of the global poor, to which overriding priority should be given limitations imposed by the technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs These ideas are essentially equivalent to intergenerational equity. "Needs" are basic and essential, economic growth will facilitate their fulfillment, and equity is encouraged by citizen participation. Another key element in the definition is the unity of environment and development. The Brundtland Commission argues against the assertions of the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and provides an alternative perspective on sustainable development, unique from that of the 1980 World Conservation Strategy of the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The Brundtland Commission pushed for the idea that while the "environment" was previously perceived as a sphere separate from human emotion or action, and while "development" was a term habitually used to describe political goals or economic progress, it is more comprehensive to understand the two terms in relation to each other (We can better understand the environment in relation to development and we can better understand development in relation to the environment because they cannot and should not be distinguished as separate entities). Brundtland argues"...the "environment" is where we live; and "development" is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable."The Brundtland Commission insists that the environment be something beyond physicality, going beyond that traditional school of thought to include social and political atmospheres and circumstances. It also insists that development is not just about how poor countries can ameliorate their situation, but what the entire world, including developed countries, can do to ameliorate our common situation. The Brundtland Commission Report recognized that human resource development in the form of poverty reduction, gender equity, and wealth redistribution was crucial to formulating strategies for environmental conservation, and it also recognized that environmental limits to economic growth in industrialized and industrializing societies existed. The Report offered "the analysis, the broad remedies, and the recommendations for a sustainable course of development" within such societies (1987:16). Responses to the definition The Brundtland definition is particularly open to interpretation, allowing for widespread support from diverse efforts, groups and organizations. This has also been a criticism: the definition has been called "self-defeating and compromised rhetoric".[7] Despite this, thanks to the Brundtland Commission, the issue of sustainable development entered the agenda of international and national institutions, corporations and cities. The definition gave light to new perspectives on the sustainability of an ever-changing planet with an ever-changing population. Structure The Brundtland Commission was chaired by former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. Politicians, civil servants, and environmental experts make up the majority of the members. Members of the commission represent 21 different nations (both developed and developing countries are included). Many of the members are important political figures in their home country. One example is William Ruckelshaus, former head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. All members of the commission were appointed by both Gro Harlem Brundtland and Mansour Khalid, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The commission focuses on setting up networks to promote environmental stewardship. Most of these networks make connections between governments and non-government entities. One such network is Bill Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development. In this council government and business leaders come together to share ideas on how to encourage sustainable development. The Brundtland Commission has been the most successful in forming international ties between governments and multinational corporations. The 1992 and 2002 Earth Summits were the direct results of the Brundtland Commission. The international structure and scope of the Brundtland Commission allow multiple problems (such as deforestation and ozone depletion) to be looked at from a holistic approach.[8] Sustainability efforts The three main pillars of sustainable development include economic growth, environmental protection, and social equality. While many people agree that each of these three ideas contribute to the overall idea of sustainability, it is difficult to find evidence of equal levels of initiatives for the three pillars in countries' policies worldwide. With the overwhelming number of countries that put economic growth on the forefront of sustainable development, it is evident that the other two pillars have been suffering, especially with the overall well-being of the environment in a dangerously unhealthy state. The Brundtland Commission has put forth a conceptual framework that many nations agree with and want to try to make a difference with in their countries, but it has been difficult to change these concepts about sustainability into concrete actions and programs. Implementing sustainable development globally is still a challenge, but because of the Brundtland Commission's efforts, progress has been made. After releasing their report, Our Common Future, the Brundtland Commission called for an international meeting to take place where more concrete initiatives and goals could be mapped out. This meeting was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. A comprehensive plan of action, known as Agenda 21, came out of the meeting. Agenda 21 entailed actions to be taken globally, nationally, and locally in order to make life on Earth more sustainable going into the future.[9] Economic Growth Economic Growth is the pillar that most groups focus on when attempting to attain more sustainable efforts and development. In trying to build their economies, many countries focus their efforts on resource extraction, which leads to unsustainable efforts for environmental protection as well as economic growth sustainability. While the Commission was able to help to change the association between economic growth and resource extraction, the total worldwide consumption of resources is projected to increase in the future. So much of the natural world has already been converted into human use that the focus cannot simply remain on economic growth and omit the ever-growing problem of environmental sustainability. Agenda 21 reinforces the importance of finding ways to generate economic growth without hurting the environment. Through various trade negotiations such as improving access to markets for exports of developing countries, Agenda 21 looks to increase economic growth sustainability in countries that need it most.[10] Environmental Protection Environmental Protection has become more important to government and businesses over the last 20 years, leading to great improvements in the number of people willing to invest in green technologies. For the second year in a row in 2010, the United States and Europe added more power capacity from renewable sources such as wind and solar. In 2011 the efforts continue with 45 new wind energy projects beginning in 25 different states.[11] The focus on environmental protection has transpired globally as well, including a great deal of investment in renewable energy power capacity. Eco-city development occurring around the world helps to develop and implement water conservation, smart grids with renewable energy sources, LED street lights and energy efficient building. The consumption gap remains, consisting of the fact that "roughly 80 percent of the natural resources used each year are consumed by about 20 percent of the world's population". This level is striking and still needs to be addressed now and throughout the future.[12] Social Equality The Social Equality and Equity as pillars of sustainable development focus on the social well-being of people. The growing gap between incomes of rich and poor is evident throughout the world with the incomes of the richer households increasing relative to the incomes of middle - or lower-class households. This is attributed partly to the land distribution patterns in rural areas where majority live from land. Global inequality has been declining, but the world is still extremely unequal, with the richest 1% of the world's population owning 40% of the world's wealth and the poorest 50% owning around 1%. The Brundtland Commission made a significant impact trying to link environment and development and thus, go away from the idea of environmental protection whereby some scholars saw environment as something of its sake. The Commission has thus reduced the number of people living on less than a dollar a day to just half of what it used to be, as many can approach the environment and use it. These achievements can also be attributed to economic growth in China and India.[12] Members of the Commission Chairman: Gro Harlem Brundtland (Norway) Vice Chairman: Mansour Khalid (Sudan) Susanna Agnelli (Italy) Saleh A. Al-Athel (Saudi Arabia) Pablo Gonzalez Casanova (Mexico) (ceased to participate in August 1986 for personal reasons) Bernard Chidzero (Zimbabwe) Lamine Mohammed Fadika (Côte d'Ivoire) Volker Hauff (Federal Republic of Germany) István Láng (Hungary) Ma Shijun (People's Republic of China)[13] Margarita Marino de Botero (Colombia) Nagendra Singh (India) Paulo Nogueira Neto (Brazil) Saburo Okita (Japan) Shridath S. Rampal (Guyana) William D. Ruckelshaus (USA) Mohamed Sahnoun (Algeria) Emil Salim (Indonesia) Bukar Shaib (Nigeria) Vladimir Sokolov (USSR) Janez Stanovnik (Yugoslavia) Maurice Strong (Canada) Ex Officio Jim MacNeill (Canada)[14] Staff of the Commission In May 1984, an Organizational Meeting of the Commission was held in Geneva to adopt its rules of procedure and operation and to appoint a Secretary General to guide its work. In July 1984, a Secretariat was established in Geneva, temporarily at the Centre de Morillon and later at the Palais Wilson. Members of the Secretariat have included:[15] Secretary General: Jim MacNeil Senior Professional Staff Nation Desai, Senior Economic Advisor Vitus Fernando, Senior Programme Officer Banislav Gosovic, Senior Programme Officer Marie-Madeleine Jacquemier, Finance and Administrative Officer Kazu Karo, Director of Programmes Warren H. Lindoer, Secretary of the Commission and Director of Administration Elisabeth Monosowski, Senior Programme Officer Gustavo Montero, Programme Planning Officer Shimwaa'i Muntemba, Senior Programme Officer Janos Pasztor, Senior Programme Officer Peter Robbs, Senior Public Information Advisor Vicente Sanchez, Director of Programmes Linda Starke, Editor Peter Stone, Director of Information Edith Surber, Finance and Administrative Officer General Services and Support Staff Brita Baker Elisabeth Bohler-Goodship Marie-Pierre Destouet Marian Doku Tamara Dean Dunn Aud Loen Jelka de Marsano Chedra Mayhew Christl Oleach Ellen Permatto Guadalupe Quesad Mildred Raphoz Evelyn Salvador Teresa Harmand Iona D'Souza Kay Streit Vicky Underhill Shane Wandrwert [16] See also Agenda 21 Our Common Future Sustainability Sustainable Development Nuclear power proposed as renewable energy References ^ "1991- The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development". 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