

It looks like an oxymoron, but Earth optimism is worth a try

Decades of environmental doom-mongering have fallen on deaf ears. Maybe a new environmental campaign with a message of hope is just what we need







FEATURE 11 October 2017

Is positive thinking the way to save the planet?

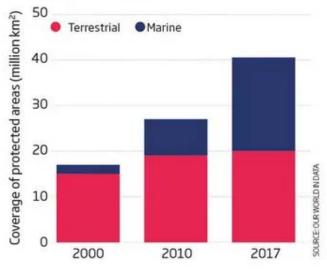
Move over doom and gloom, there is a new environmental movement in town. Earth optimists say focusing on small successes is the way forward



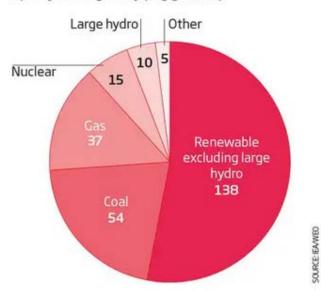


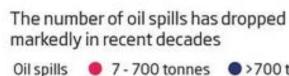
Reasons to be hopeful...

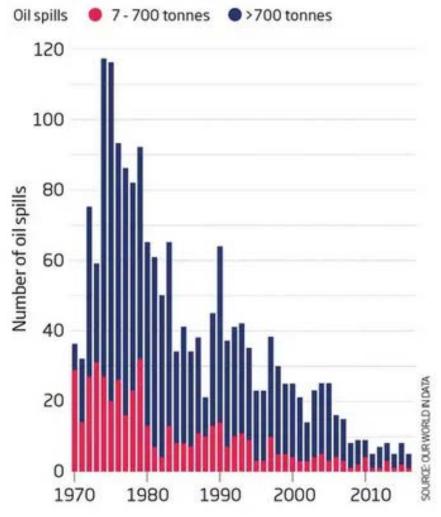
The extent of protected areas is increasing, particularly in the oceans



In 2016, for the second year in a row, renewables accounted for more than half of the new power capacity added globally (in gigawatts)









What feelings does such information evoke in you?

Top





History of the Sustainable Development concept



Possible reaction to global challenges

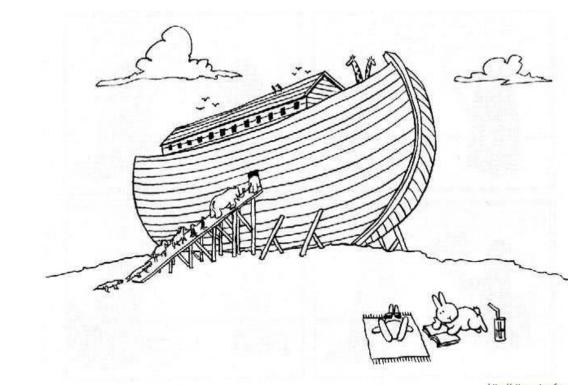
1) Ignoring or downplaying

- attitude that the global issues (climate change, poverty, biodiversity loss, etc.) is not worthy of concern

- it results in inactivity, and "business-as-usual" behaviour

- it does not solve the issues, they exacerbate and become

more difficult to solve





Env. reasons of the Western Roman Empire fall

- highly increasing prosperity of the Roman society
- deforestation, excessive grazing, water overuse and salinisation
- the growth of urban population by the migration of peasants due to taxes and hard work on the more and more degraded fields

consequences: food and water shortages, illnesses → social weakening

Date	Population	Date	Population	;
800 BCE	5,000	1084	15,000	
800-500	80,000	1377	17.000 ~	
400	300,000	1527	55,000	
200	300,000	1550	60,000	
100	800,000	1748	150,000	
100 CE	1,000,000	1800	153,000	
500	500,000	· 1870	226,000	
600	100,000	1895	450,000	
700	80,000	1950	1,000,000	
900	35,000	1980	3,000,000	

The city of Rome's population rose and fell dramatically between 200 BCE and 600 CE.



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Decreasing of positive energy balance

EROEI – Energy Return On Energy Invested

• still increasing E-dependency



Today?

- agriculture
- resources extraction
- western lifestyle in general

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2) Recognizing seriousness of the issue, but not solving it

- we are afraid of disaster, but do not believe that we can change anything by ourselves
- we remain passive in the fear of what will come and hope that "it will be resolved somehow"
- or the "flood after us" approach grab what can be grabed

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"By postponing, simple problems become complex, and then difficult to solve" General Ferdinand Foch





7000 BC-1800 BC



Mesopotamia/Sumer

Salinization and waterlogging of Sumer's agroecosystem Around 7000 BC, people in this region (now, largely, Iraq) began to modify the natural environment. Lacking adequate rainfall, land had to be irrigated for cultivation, and the demand for food increased as the population grew. The irrigated land became salinized and waterlogged. Records noting "the earth turned white" with salt date back to 2000 BC. By 1800 BC, the agricultural system—the foundation of Sumerian civilization—collapsed.

2500 BC-900



Mayan Empire

Soil erosion, loss of agroecosystem viability, and water siltation in Central America Mayans lived in what are now parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and Honduras. The agriculture techniques they used were creative and intensive—clearing hillsides of jungle, terracing fields to contain soil erosion, draining swamps by digging ditches and using the soil from the ditches to form raised fields. Eventually too much was demanded of this system. Soil erosion reduced crop yields, and higher levels of silt in rivers damaged the raised fields. Decreased food production and competition for the remaining resources may have led to that civilization's demise.

50 BC-450



Roman Empire

Desertification and loss of agroecosystem viability in North Africa The challenge of providing food for the population of Rome and its large standing armies plagued the empire. The North African provinces, once highly productive granaries, gradually became degraded as Roman demands for grain pushed cultivation onto marginal lands, prone to erosion. Scrub vegetation spread and some intensively cultivated areas became desertified. The irrigation systems the Romans used depended on watersheds that have since been deforested, and now yield less runoff, reducing the chance of restoring productivity.



1400-1600



Canary Islands

Human and natural resource exploitation, degradation and extinctions in many regions

Originally from North Africa, the Guanches were a people who inhabited the Canary Islands for more than 1,000 years before the Spanish arrived in the 1400s. The Spanish enslaved the Guanches, cleared the forests, and built sugar cane plantations. By 1600 the Guanches were dead, victims of Eurasian diseases and plantation conditions. As in the Canary Islands, regions in the Americas, Africa, and Asia where people were forced to grow and export cash crops such as sugar, tobacco, cotton, rubber, bananas, or palm oil, continue to suffer from deforestation, soil damage, biodiversity losses, and economic dependency instituted during colonization.

1800



North America

Conversion, loss of habitat, and unrestrained killing of wildlife in North America

As land was cleared for settlement and cultivation around the world, animal habitats of almost every kind were reduced; animals were killed for food, hides, or recreation as commerce spread. In North America, herds of bison, totaling perhaps as many as 50 million, were hunted to near extinction by the end of the 19th century. Aquatic as well as terrestrial species became targets of exploitation and extincition. In the 19th century, whales were killed in large numbers to support industrializing economies in need of whale oil in great quantity, mainly for lighting and lubricants. On the northwest coast of North America, whale populations were on the verge of extinction by the 20th century.

1900



United States and Canada

Soil erosion and loss of biodiversity in the United States and Canada

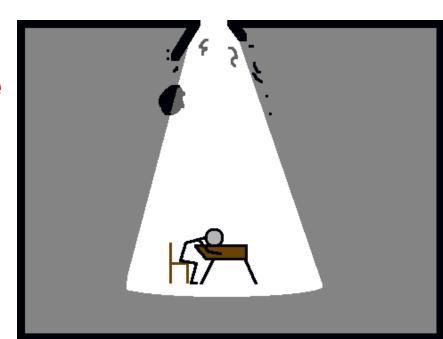
The Great Plains of the United States and Canada were ploughed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and planted with new forms of drought-resistant wheat. Once the protective original grass cover was destroyed, drought in the 1930s enabled high, persistent wind storms to blow away much of the dry soil. Soil conservation methods were subsequently introduced such that when wind erosion again affected the area in the 1950s and in the 1970s, the consequences were less severe.



3) Recognizing seriousness of the issue, and effort to solve it actively

- making an effort to stop and reverse adverse trends to avoid or mitigate the anticipated consequences
- the concept of Sustainable Development is such an effort that gives us a hope!

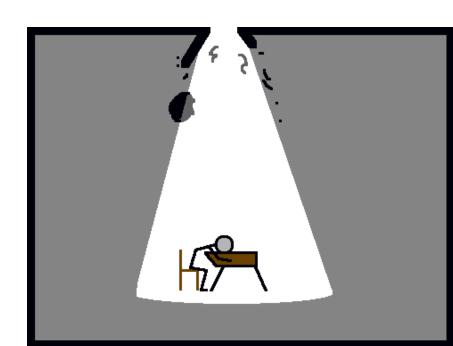
 We are not responsible for the result, but for the invested effort!





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Sustainable Development - first ideas

The Constitution of the Iroquois Nations (circa 14. century)





<u>Sustainable Development – first ideas</u>

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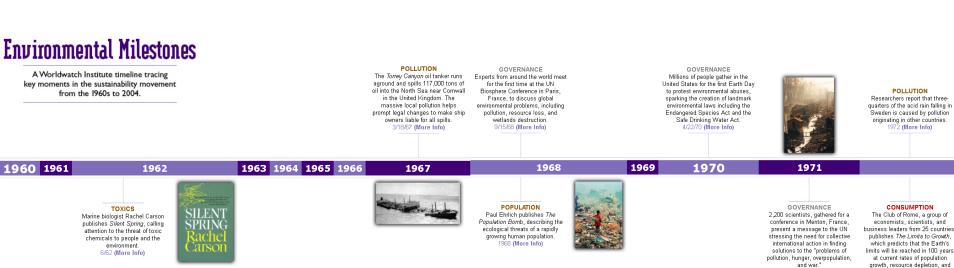
The Constitution of the Iroquois Nations

In all of your deliberations in the Confederate Council, in your efforts at law making, in all your official acts, self interest shall be cast into oblivion. Cast not over your shoulder behind you the warnings of the nephews and nieces should they chide you for any error or wrong you may do, but return to the way of the Great Law which is just and right. Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground -- the unborn of the future Nation."



The advent of the modern environmental movement

- influence on the revision of the development strategy
- actual development strategy break free from life in poverty



and war." 7/71 (More Info)

pollution generation. 1972 (More Info)

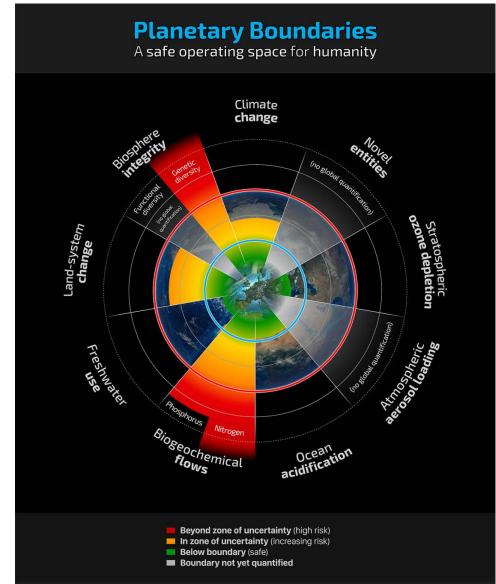
- what are the limits of the Earth???



Have you ever heard about any book, report, paper describing limits of the Earth?

what are the limits of the Earth???

2009, 2015



- what are the limits of the Earth???

1968 - Club of Rome

group of intellectuals engaged in global issues

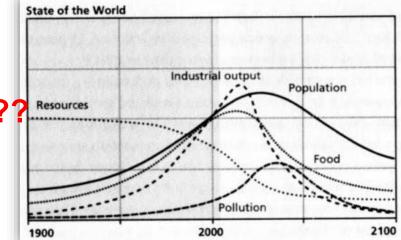
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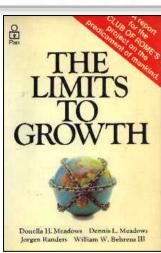
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- Earth limits in perspective of the exponential growth
- World3 a feedback model
- variables: population, industrial output, food, pollution, resources consumption





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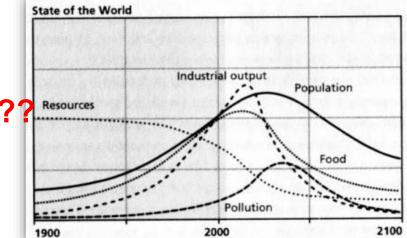
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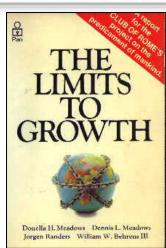
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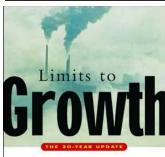
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2002 – Limits to growth - 30 year update

update based on actual data

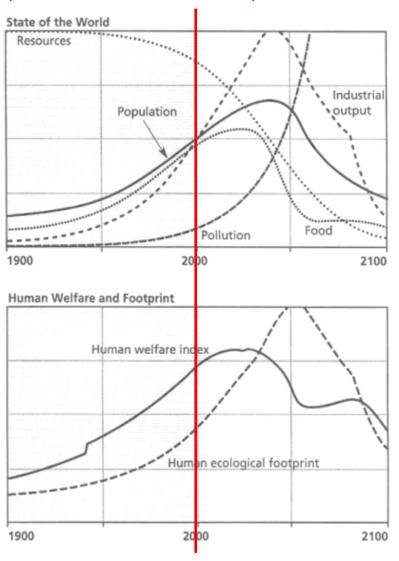




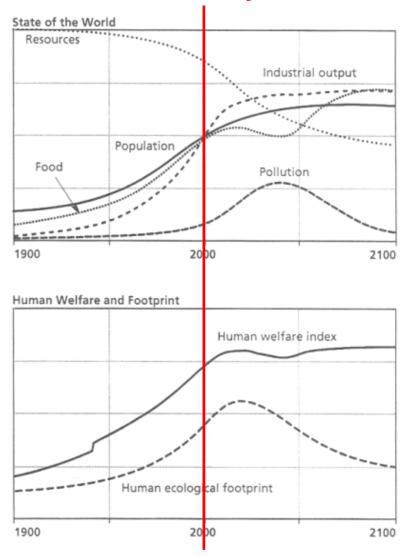


<u>Model WORLD3 – prognosis of development</u>

Scenario 1 – without any changes (*Business-as-Usual*)



Scenario 2 – change towards the **Sustainable Society**

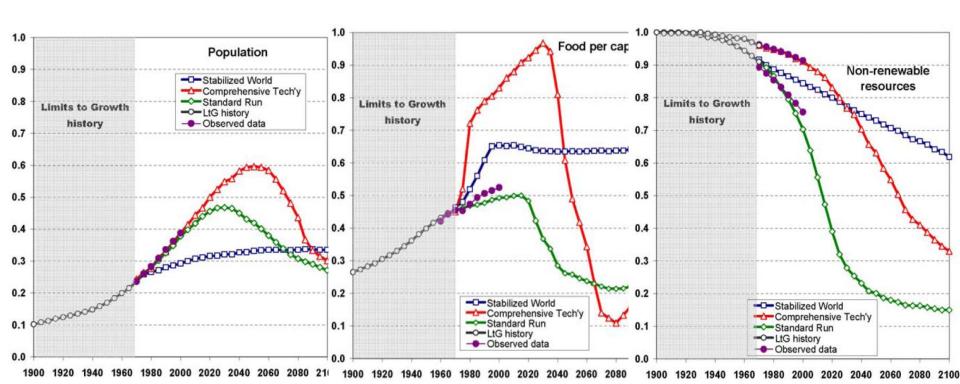


Reality x predictions of model WORLD3

Graham Turner (Global Environmental Change) 2008

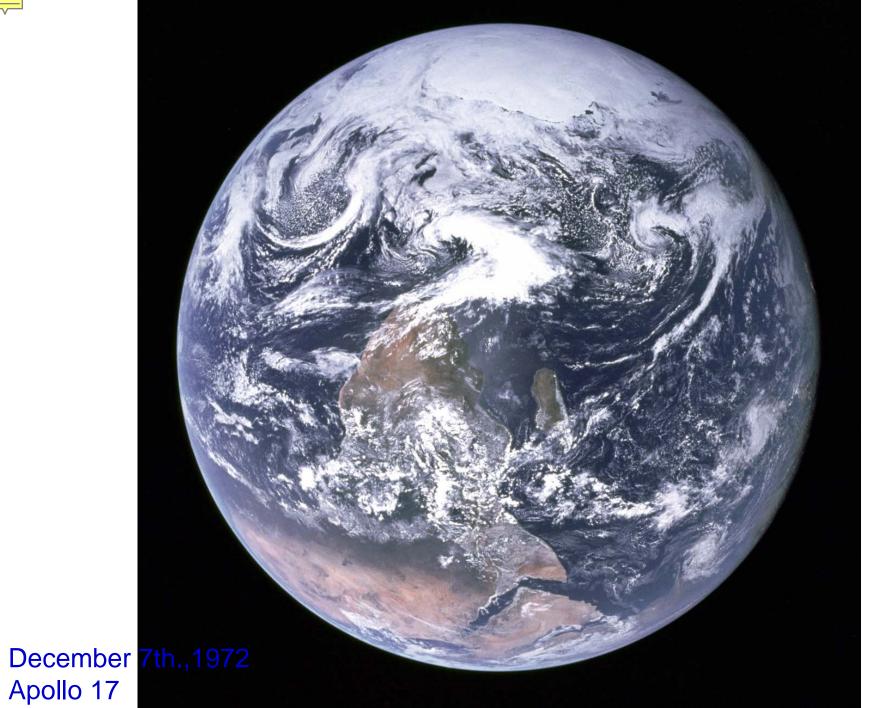
A comparison of the Limits to Growth with 30 year reality, 2008

"The analysis shows that 30 years of historical data compares favorably with key features of a business-as-usual scenario..."











UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE)

- world's first policy response to the global issues
- determination of global env. issues threatening the existence of people on the Earth



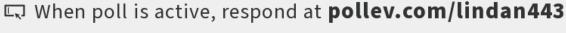
UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE)

- world's first policy response to the global issues
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- 1) production of hazardous gaseous, liquid or solid <u>wastes</u> in excess of the acceptable level endangering human health and nature.
- 2) risks of <u>disrupting life-giving planetary systems</u> such as the hydrological cycle, the O₃ layer and the climate systems.
- 3) threatened by overexploitation and over-utilization of renewable and nonrenewable <u>resources</u>
- 4) reduction of planet's biological richness genetic basis of individual plant and animal species, number of species, and <u>diversity</u> of ecosystems

- representatives from 113 countries, 19 intergov. agencies and more than 400 NGOs were present total >1200 delegates
- UNCHE called for immediate action to protect the environment at both national and international level







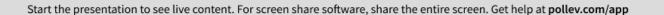
Text LINDAN443 to +420 736 350 959 once to join

Only the one "Minister of the Environment" attended the conference?

The others had not free time they had to solve other urgent env. issues.

The others did not considered that it is necessary.

No more "MoE" were over the world.



- representatives from 113 countries, 19 intergov. agencies and more than 400 NGOs were present – total >1200 delegates
- UNCHE called for immediate action to protect the environment at both national and international level
- followed by the establishment of environmental ministries
- established UN Environment Programme UNEP







1972 – Stockholm



- pointed out to the great contradiction in the view of the developed vs. the developing countries
- "Poverty is the worst form of pollution" Indira Gandhi
- if people deal with existential issues, then the concern for the environment stands apart
- priority: to survive here and now
- concern for good environment, biodiversity preservation, etc. is a privilege especially in rich countries that are no longer addressing the poverty issues
- investment in roads, dams, irrigation, infrastructure etc.





<u>1973</u>



1973

Oil crisis

- OPEC sharply increases oil prices in the 1970s
- price of oil from Abu Dhabi \$ 2.54 (1972) x \$ 36.56 (1981) per barrel
- sharp price increases and supply constraints as a result of support of western countries to Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict





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Consequences

- queues at petrol stations,
- panic among business investors
- recession and uncontrollable inflation
- USA severely affected
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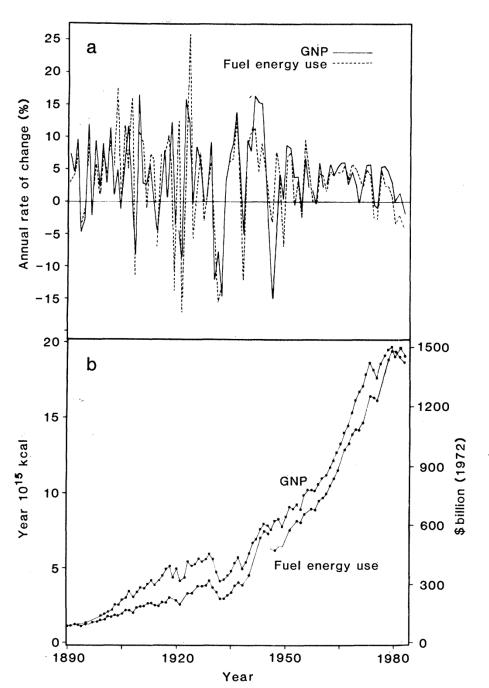
Consequences

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 - → 1977 70% of oil imports from OPEC
- reassessing energy performance
- investment in energy savings
- increasing production efficiency
- investment in R&D of renewable sources









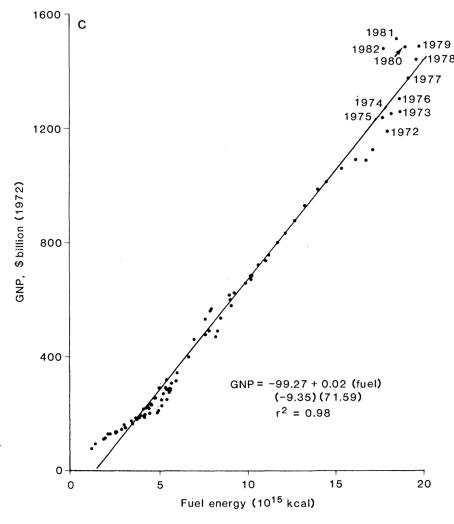


Fig. 1. (a) Annual rate of change in fuel use and real GNP in the United States from 1890 to 1982 (55, 56). Fuel use includes fossil fuels, nuclear, and hydropower. (b) Fuel use and real GNP per year. (c) Results of linear regression model between fuel use and real GNP in the United States from 1890 to 1982. The numbers in parentheses are *t*-statistics. Hydro and nuclear power converted to thermal units based on prevailing heat rates at fossil steam electric plants (55, 56).





1983 - World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)

- founded by the UN decision based on finding that people are increasingly deteriorating life-essential environment and destroys resources
- the aim of this scientific commission:

 "to find ways how to put global development on
 the road sustainable until the 21st century "

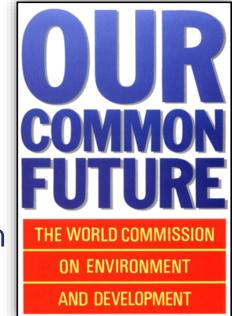
led by Norwegian prime minister
 Gro Harlem Brundtland
 ("Brundtland commission")





Brundtland commision - 1987

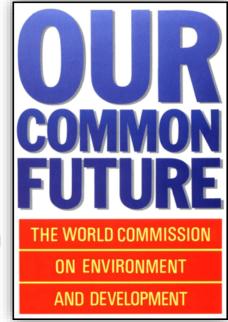
- result:1987 report "Our common future"
- groundbreaking document in the env. protection
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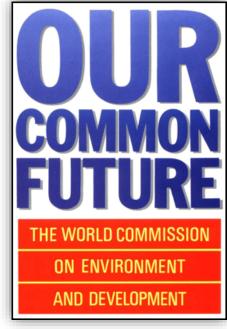


"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



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"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

It contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.



<u> 1992 – Rio de Janeiro</u>



United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) – The Earth Summit

- representatives of 172 countries (108 presidents / prime ministers), 2400 NGO representatives
- parallel NGO Global Forum 17,000 participants
- UN seeks ways to support re-assessment of national economic development and stop destruction of nonrenewable resources and planetary pollution









TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE IT HAPPEN



1992 – Rio de Janeiro



- governments recognized the need to regulate national and international plans where all economic decisions should consider all environmental consequences



<u> 1992 – Rio de Janeiro</u>

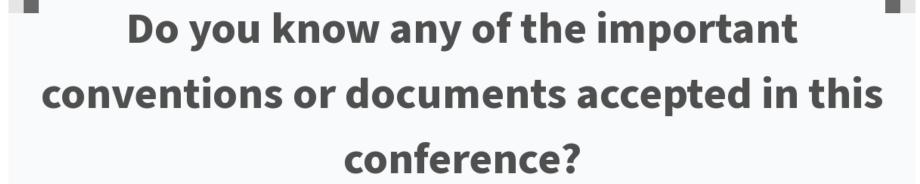


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UN expressed support to governments in the following areas:

- <u>production patterns</u> reassessing the production of toxic substances such as lead in gasoline and toxic waste
- <u>alternative energy sources -</u> to replace fossil fuels associated with the development of climate change
- •<u>the public transport system -</u> a method of reducing transport emissions, congestion in cities and health problems from smog
- addressing the alarming increase in <u>water scarcity</u>





Top



<u> 1992 – Rio de Janeiro</u>

- accepted 5 important treaties:
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- Agenda 21
- Convention on **Biological Diversity** (B)
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (B)
- The Forest Principles

established "The UN Commission on SD"





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Take-home message of the Earth Summit

"To achieve the necessary changes needs nothing less than a change in our attitudes and behaviour"



2000 – New York

Millennium Summit

- expressed support for the intention of the international community to "develop genuinely sustainable,"
- respect for nature declared as a fundamental value



2000 – New York

Millennium Summit

- expressed support for the intention of the international community to "develop genuinely sustainable,
- respect for nature declared as a fundamental value
- 8 Millennium Development Goals developed after the summit
- main focus is to eradicate poverty and other ills of the world

2015 x 1990







Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty



Goal 2

Achieve Universal Primary Education



Goal 3

Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women



Goal 4

Reduce Child Mortality



Soal 5.

Improve Maternal Health



Goal 6

Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases



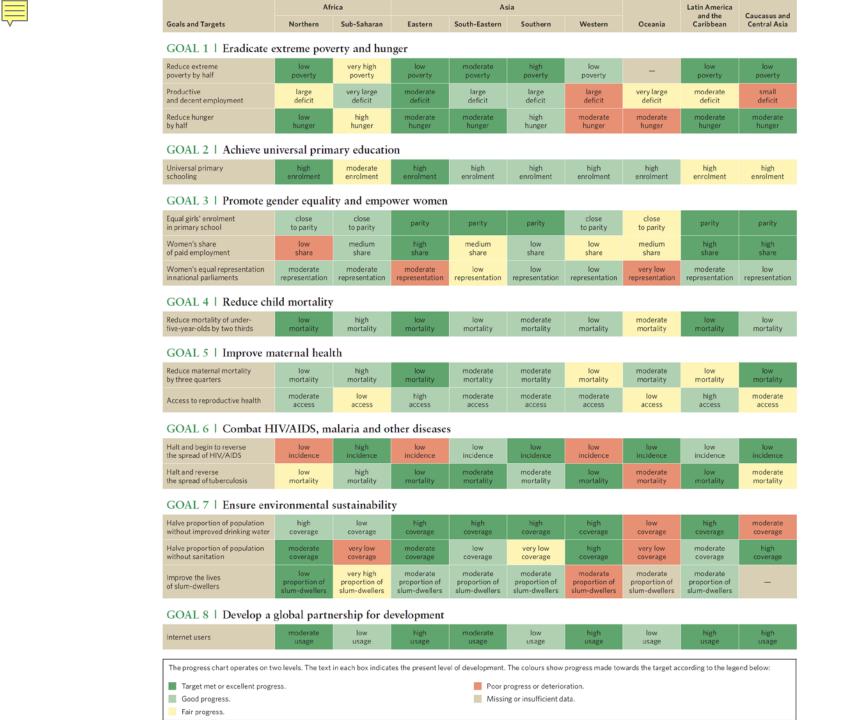
Coal 7

Ensure Environmental Sustainability



Goal 8

Develop a Global Partnership for Development





2002 – Johannesburg

The World Summit on Sustainable Development



Five key topics of the conference:

- 1) globalization
- 2) harmonizing development and the environment protection
- 3) poverty and the MDGs
- 4) consumption and production models
- 5) protection of biodiversity and natural resources
- a critical assessment of the journey to SD was expected
- the result rather disappointing
- instead of confirming and supporting the SD, the delegates went rather "Sustainable" way of discussions, statements and commitment to the world's problems;-(



2002 - Johannesburg

SUSTA INABILE DE LOS PORTES PO

- main output: *Plan of Implementation*
- -it contains goals and a timetable in the discussed SD areas
- support for SD by big multinational companies (NGOs in Rio)

Main achievement:

- global support to fulfilling of 8MDGs



2012 - Rio+20

UN Conference on



Sustainable Development (June 20-22, 2012)

- two main topics:
- 1) Institutional framework for SD
- 2) Green economy within the SD and poverty eradication



ad 1) Institutional framework for SD

- UN Commission for sustainable development (CSD) as the main body covering the issue of SD in the UN, has a very weak mandate (abolish or replace it with a stronger one)
- as well as UNEP (env. pillar) in comparison with ILO (social pillar) or WTO (economic pillar) has a weak position
 it is "only" program



The United Nations System

UN Principal Organs

General Assembly

Security Council

Economic and Social Council

Secretariat

International Court of Justice

> Trusteeship Council⁶

Notes:

- 1 The United Nations, its Funds and Programmes, the Specialized Agencies, IAEA and WTO are all members of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).
- 2 UNRWA and UNIDIR report only to the General Assembly (GA).
- 3 IAEA reports to the Security Council and the GA.
- 4 WTO has no reporting obligation to the GA, but contributes on an ad hoc basis to GA and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) work on, inter alia, finance and development
- 5 Specialized Agencies are autonomous organizations whose work is coordinated through ECOSOC (intergovernmental level) and CEB (inter-secretariat level).
- 6 The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994, as on 1 October 1994 Palau, the last United Nations Trust Territory, became independent.

This is not an official document of the United Nations, nor is it intended to be all inclusive.

Funds and Programmes

UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

 ITC International Trade Centre (UNCTAD/WTO)

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

- **UNCDF** United Nations Capital Development Fund
- UNV United Nations Volunteers

UNEP United Nations Environment Programme **UNFPA** United Nations Population Fund

UN-HABITAT United Nations Human Settlements Programme

UNHCR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

UNRWA² United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

UN-Women United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

WFP World Food Programme

Research and Training Institutes

UNICRI United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

UNIDIR² United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research

UNITAR United Nations Institute for Training and Research

UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

UNSSC United Nations System Staff College **UNU** United Nations University

Other Entities

UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UNISDR United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services

Related Organizations

CTBTO Preparatory Commission Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization

IAEA 1,3 International Atomic Energy Agency

OPCW Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical

WTO^{1,4} World Trade Organization

Subsidiary Bodies

Subsidiary Bodies

Main and other sessional

Disarmament Commission

International Law Commission

Human Rights Council

Standing committees

and ad hoc bodies

committees

Counter-terrorism committees International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)

Functional Commissions

Science and Technology for Development

Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Population and Development

Narcotic Drugs

Social Development

Status of Women

Sustainable Development

United Nations Forum on Forests

Statistics

Peacekeeping operations and political missions Sanctions committees (ad hoc) Standing committees and

ad hoc bodies

Regional Commissions

ECA Economic Commission for Africa

ECE Economic Commission for Europe

ECLAC Economic Commission

for Latin America and

ESCAP Economic and Social

ESCWA Economic and Social

Commission for Asia and

Commission for Western Asia

the Caribbean

the Pocific

Military Staff Committee

Advisory Subsidiary Body

Other Bodies

Administration

Organizations

Committee for Development Policy

Committee on Non-Governmental

United Nations Group of Experts

on Geographical Names

Other sessional and standing

and related bodies

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

committees and expert, ad hoc

Committee of Experts on Public

Peacebuilding Commission

Specialized Agencies 1,5

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization

IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development

ILO International Labour Organization

IMF International Monetary Fund **IMO** International Maritime

Organization

ITU International Telecommunication

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNWTO World Tourism Organization

UPU Universal Postal Union WHO World Health Organization

WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization

WMO World Meteorological Organization

World Bank Group

- IBRD International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- **ICSID** International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes
- IDA International Development Association
- IFC International Finance Corporation
- MIGA Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency

Departments and Offices

EOSG Executive Office of the Secretary-General

DESA Department of Economic and Social Affairs

DFS Department of Field Support

DM Department of Management

and Conference Management

DPA Department of Political Affairs

DPI Department of Public Information

DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations

DSS Department of Safety and Security

OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OIOS Office of Internal Oversight Services

OLA Office of Legal Affairs

OSAA Office of the Special Adviser on Africa

SRSG/CAAC Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

SRSG/SVC Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

UNODA Office for Disarmament Affairs

UNOG United Nations Office at Geneva

UN-OHRLLS Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island **Developing States**

UNON United Nations Office at Nairobi

UNOV United Nations Office at Vienna

DGACM Department for General Assembly

OHCHR Office of the United Nations

High Commissioner for Human Rights



- ad 2) Green economy

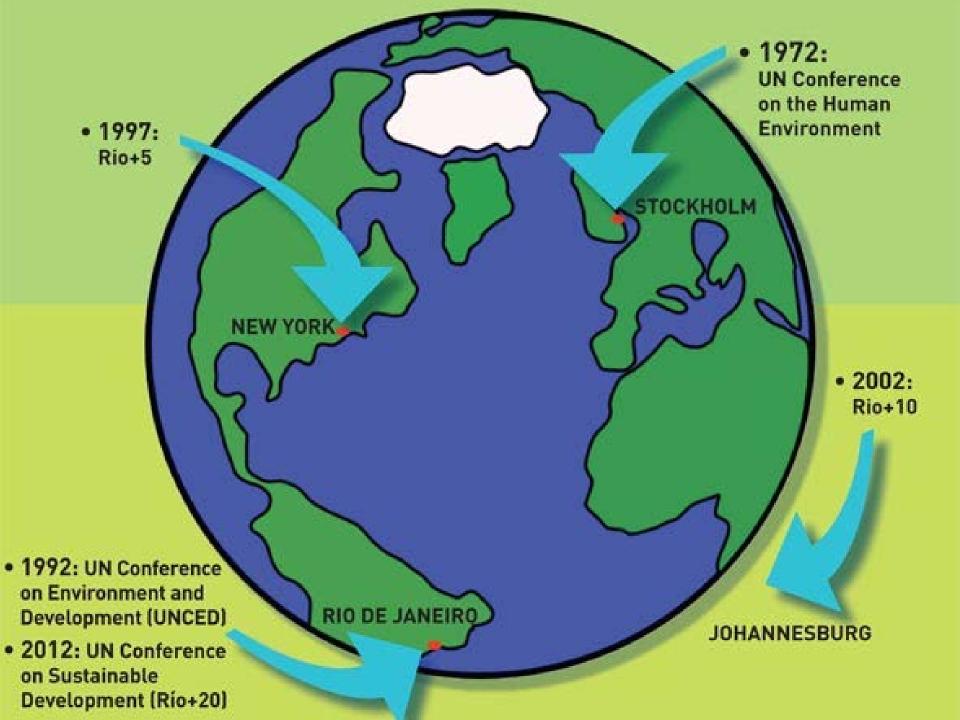
"A green economy is low-carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive."

- measuring the success (now GDP) must be reassessed, taking account of pollution, resource depletion, ecosystem decline. services, and the effects of this on the poor

Biodiversity	Ecosystem goods and services (examples)	Economic values (examples)
Ecosystems (variety & extent/area)	RecreationWater regulationCarbon storage	Avoiding greenhouse gas emissions by conserving forests: US\$ 3.7 trillion (NPV)
Species (diversity & abundance)	Food, fiber, fuelDesign inspirationPollination	Contribution of insect pollinators to agricultural output: ~US\$ 190 billion/year
Genes (variability & population)	Medicinal discoveriesDisease resistanceAdaptive capacity	25-50% of the US\$ 640 billion pharmaceutical market is derived from genetic resources

Table 1: Natural capital - Underlying components and illustrative services and values

Source: Eliasch (2008); Gallai et al. (2009); TEEB (2009)



<u>2015 - 2030</u>

Sustainable development goals (SDG)



SUSTAINABLE GALS







































Smarter Global Targets to 2030

PEOPLE

- LOWER CHRONIC CHILD MALNUTRITION BY 40%
- HALVE MALARIA INFECTION
- REDUCE TUBERCULOSIS DEATHS BY 90%
- AVOID 1.1M HIV INFECTIONS THROUGH CIRCUMCISION
- CUT EARLY DEATH FROM CHRONIC DISEASE BY 1/3

- REDUCE NEWBORN MORTALITY BY 70%
- INCREASE IMMUNIZATION TO REDUCE CHILD DEATHS BY 25%
- MAKE FAMILY PLANNING AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE
- ELIMINATE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

PLANET

- PHASE OUT FOSSIL FUEL SUBSIDIES
- HALVE CORAL REEF LOSS

- TAX POLLUTION DAMAGE FROM ENERGY
- CUT INDOOR AIR POLLUTION BY 20%

PROSPERITY

- REDUCE TRADE RESTRICTIONS (FULL DOHA)
- IMPROVE GENDER EQUALITY IN OWNERSHIP, BUSINESS AND POLITICS
- BOOST AGRICULTURAL YIELD GROWTH BY 40%

- INCREASE GIRLS' EDUCATION BY TWO YEARS
- ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
- TRIPLE PRESCHOOL IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

