



Government of Tamilnadu

Department of Employment and Training

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Subject : Environment, Biodiversity and Disaster Management
Topic : Environmental Sustainability

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Commissioner,

Department of Employment and Training.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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Environmental sustainability is the ability of the environment to support a defined level of environmental quality and natural resource extraction rates forever to mankind. Unnecessary disturbances to the environment should be avoided whenever possible.

Why is sustainability important?

The excessive usage of natural and manmade resources deplete its availability for the future generation. We need to look after our planet, our resources and our people to ensure that we can hand over our planet to our children to live in true sustainability. Hence conservation and awareness are the two important terms that can bring sustainability to our living. When we use the word sustainability to mean maintain, it means to maintain it forever. This is because our actions have a lasting effect on the environment and we should protect it for our future generations.

United Nations and Sustainable Development

Sustainability was first featured in the principles adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held at Stockholm on 16 June 1972. It was now realized that development needed to be sustainable – it should not only focus on economic and social matters, but also on matters related to the use of natural resources. The United Nations commissioned a group of 22 people from both developed and developing countries to identify long-term environmental strategies for the international community. This World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), was headed by Gro Harlem Brundtland, then the Prime Minister of Norway. This commission came to be known as the Brundtland Commission, which submitted its report, entitled Our common future, to the UN in 1987.

The Brundtland Report focused on the needs and interests of humans. It was concerned with securing a global equity for future generations by redistributing resources towards

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poorer nations to encourage their economic growth in order to enable all human beings to achieve their basic needs.

The report highlighted the three fundamental components of sustainable development, the environment, the economy, and society, which later became known as the triple bottom line.

The 1992 and 2002 Earth Summits held at Rio de Janeiro and Johannesburg were the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), a direct result of the Brundtland Commission. An important achievement of the Rio summit was an agreement on the Climate Change Convention which led to the Kyoto Protocol.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio 2012, Rio+20 or Earth Summit 2012 was the third and recent International conference on sustainable development. It was hosted by Brazil in Rio de Janeiro from 13 to 22 June 2012.

Concept and Goals of Sustainable Development

In 1980 the International Union for the Conservation of Nature introduced the term "sustainable development". Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A primary goal of sustainable development is to achieve a reasonable and equitably distributed level of economic wellbeing that can be continued for many human generations.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 1992, the UN Conference on Environment and Development published the Earth Charter, which outlined the building of a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. The action plan was known as 'Agenda 21' for sustainable development. In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the "Universal, integrated and transformative"

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals are to be implemented and achieved in every country from the year

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2016 to 2030. Countries adopted a set of goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years. For the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society and people.

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere One in five people in developing countries still live on less than \$1.90 a day, many people risk slipping back into poverty. Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people centered rural development and protecting the environment. A profound change of the global food and agriculture system is needed if we are to nourish today's 815 million hungry and the additional 2 billion people expected by 2050.

Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages Significant strides have been made in increasing life expectancy and reducing some of the common killers associated with child and maternal mortality. Major progress has been made on increasing access to clean water and sanitation, reducing malaria, tuberculosis, polio and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrolment rates in schools particularly for women and girls. For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys, but few countries have achieved that target at all levels of education.

Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world.

Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all Clean, accessible water for all is an essential part of the world we want to live in. There is sufficient fresh water on the planet

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to achieve this. But due to bad economics or poor infrastructure, every year millions of people, most of them children, die from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene. By 2050, at least one in four people is likely to live in a country affected by chronic or recurring shortages of fresh water.

Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Energy is central to nearly every major challenge and opportunity the world faces today. Sustainable energy is opportunity – it transforms lives, economies and the planet.

Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
Sustainable economic growth will require societies to create the conditions that allow people to have quality jobs that stimulate the economy while not harming the environment. Job opportunities and decent working conditions are also required for the whole working age population.

Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Inclusive and sustainable industrial development is the primary source of income generation, allows for rapid and sustained increases in living standards for all people, and provides the technological solutions to environmentally sound industrialization.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries to reduce inequality, policies should be universal in principle paying attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations.

Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Cities are hubs for ideas, commerce, culture, science, productivity, social development and much more. At their best, cities have enabled people to advance socially and economically. Common urban challenges include congestion, lack of funds to provide basic services, a shortage of adequate housing and declining infrastructure.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Sustainable consumption and production is about promoting resource and energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, and providing access to basic services, green and decent jobs and a better quality of life for all. Its implementation helps to achieve overall

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development plans, reduce future economic, environmental and social costs, strengthen economic competitiveness and reduce poverty.

Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts Climate change is now affecting every country on every continent. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives, costing people, communities and countries dearly today and may be even more tomorrow.

Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. The world's oceans – their temperature, currents and life – drive global systems that make the earth habitable for humankind. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.

Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss Forests cover 30 per cent of the Earth's surface and in addition to providing food security and shelter, forests are key to combating climate change, protecting biodiversity and the homes of the indigenous population. Thirteen million hectares of forests are being lost every year while the persistent degradation of dry lands has led to the desertification of 3.6 billion hectares.

Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies. This Goal is dedicated to the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions at all levels.

Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. A successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society. These inclusive partnerships built upon principles and values, a shared vision, and shared goals that place people and the planet at the centre, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level.

Question:

1. What is environment sustainability and why it is very important to the environment and give short notes on SDG goals?