

## A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO EARTH SUMMIT 2002

**Develop** vt. 1. Bring to maturity 2. Elaborate 3. Improve value or change use of 4. Evolve 5. Bring forth, bring out 7. Grow to a maturer state **Development** vt. Stage of growth or advancement

**Sustain** vt 1. Keep, hold up 2. Endure 3. Keep alive 4. Confirm 5. Nourish 6. Encourage, stand

### **Where did it all start?**

Sustainable development lies at the heart of the Earth Summit process. The journey toward sustainable development has not been straightforward and is far from being fully achieved. In the last thirty years a whole series of events have brought us to the wide-ranging interpretation of sustainable development that we see today.

The concept of sustainable development dates back a long way but it was at the UN Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) that the international community met for the first time to consider global environment and development needs (Figure 1). The Conference led to the formation of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The Stockholm Declaration and Action Plan, which were also produced, defined principles for the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment, and highlighted the need to support people in this process. The Conference indicated that "industrialised" environmental problems, such as habitat degradation, toxicity and acid rain, were not necessarily relevant issues for all countries. Development strategies were not meeting the needs of the poorest countries and communities. However, it was the pending environmental problems that dominated the meeting and wider public awareness. Books such as "*The Silent Spring*" by Rachel Carson gave a foretaste of the view that, if international development continues along its present path, the world is rapidly heading for a major breakdown.

In the 1980's the UN set up the World Commission on Environment and Development, also known as the Brundtland Commission. They produced "*Our Common Future*", otherwise known as the Brundtland Report, which framed much of what would become the 40 chapters of Agenda 21 and the 27 principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. It defined sustainable development as development which;

*"meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*

The 20th anniversary of Stockholm took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The UN Conference on Environment and Development, the "*Earth Summit*", agreed Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration. These documents outlined key policies for achieving sustainable development that meets the needs of the poor and recognises the limits of development to meet global needs. "Needs" was therefore interpreted not solely in terms of economic interests but also to be those of a fully functional, *harmonious*, global system that incorporates people and ecosystems. Figure 2 outlines the four broad areas of action within Agenda 21

### **Redressing the Balance**

The Summit brought environment and development issues firmly into the public arena. Along with the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 it led to agreement on two legally binding conventions: Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. It also produced a Statement of Forest Principles. The Earth Summit gave rise to a number of positive responses including the emergence of thousands of Local Agenda 21 initiatives and the



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enhanced political profile of environmental issues. It led to the formation of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD) and many countries set up sustainable development commissions and national strategies.

**Figure 1. Steps to Earth Summit 2002**

Key Events	UN Sustainable Development Process
	1972 UN Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm) Establishes UN Environment Programme (UNEP).
1982 UNEP's first high level meeting (Kenya) <i>Convention on Straddling and Migratory Fish Stocks (signed)</i>	World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) set up
1991 Children's Summit (New York)	Brundtland Report "Our Common Future"
1992 <i>Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC)</i> <i>Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)</i>	1989 <b>UN Conference on Environment and Development "Earth Summit"</b> . Establishes UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Accession of FCCC and CBD.
1993 Human Rights Summit (Vienna)	1992 - UN Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD)
1994 Population Summit (Cairo) <i>Convention on Combating Desertification (Paris)</i>	1993 - First five-year programme.
1995 Social Summit (Copenhagen) Women's Summit (Beijing) World Trade Organisation (WTO) established	1997 <b>Rio + 5 Summit Review</b>
1996 Human Settlements Conference (Istanbul) Food Summit (Rome)	1997 CSD Second five-year programme.
1997 <i>Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change (signed)</i>	1998 - Overarching themes: poverty, changing production and consumption patterns.
1999 Cairo + 5 (Population)	2001 May (CSD 10) <b>Global Preparatory Committee 1</b> Organizational issues. Defining modalities of process. (Set up a global multi-stakeholder committee)*.
2000 Beijing + 5 (Women) Copenhagen + 5 (Social) Millennium Summit (New York) World Youth Forum (Dakar)	2002 (Jan) <b>Global Preparatory Committee 2</b> Substantive review. Secretary General's reports on global, regional and national progress. (Two day input from major groups)*.
2001 UNEP Governing Council (21 <sup>st</sup> session, Kenya) Istanbul + 5 (Human settlements) New York + 10 (Children) International Conference on Freshwater (Bonn) UN Conference on Less Developed States (3 <sup>rd</sup> ) Financing for Development WTO negotiations on trade in services	(March) <b>Global Preparatory Committee 3</b> Finalize review.
2003 Environment for Europe Conference (Kiev)	(May) <b>Global Preparatory Committee 4</b> Identification and consensus building over priority areas and strategies for next 5-10 years. (Multi-stakeholder groups presenting proposals)*.
	
<b>EARTH SUMMIT 2002 (RIO +10)</b> Defining national, regional and global commitments. Including half-day dialogue with major groups*.	
<i>Beyond the Summit ...</i>	

\* Proposed

However, the description of sustainable development in Agenda 21 called for total shift in the status quo of prevalent value systems and institutional processes. Such global change could never have occurred over night. When progress was assessed at Rio + 5 (New York, 1997) a number of gaps were identified, particularly with regard to social equity and poverty. This was largely reflected by falling official development assistance (ODA) and growing international debts, along with failures to improve; technology transfer, capacity building for participation and development, institutional coordination, and reduction of excessive levels of production and consumption. This review meeting called for the

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ratification, reinforcement and stronger implementation of the growing number of international agreements and conventions which refer to environment and development.

*Figure 2. Elements of Agenda 21*

	Issues
<b>Social and Economic dimensions to development</b>	Poverty, Production and Consumption, Health, Human Settlement, Integrated decision making
<b>Conservation and management of natural resources</b>	Atmosphere, Oceans and Seas, Land, Forests, Mountains, Biological Diversity, Ecosystems, Biotechnology, Freshwater resources, Toxic Chemicals, Hazardous radioactive and solid wastes
<b>Strengthening role of Major Groups</b>	Youth, Women, Indigenous Peoples, Non-Government Organisations, Local Authorities, Trade Unions, Business, Scientific and technical communities, Farmers
<b>Means of Implementation</b>	Finance, Technology transfer, Information, Public Awareness, Capacity Building, Education, Legal Instruments, Institutional frameworks

### *Building Momentum*

Whilst the finer details of how, where and when Earth Summit 2002 will take place await resolution at the 55th UN General Assembly (November 2000), some elements are pretty well agreed. Preparations for the Summit are likely to take a three-tier structure (Figure 3) and, unlike the 1997 review, Earth Summit 2002 will carry out the review in advance of the Summit meeting itself. This is with the hope that people will arrive at the Summit ready to identify steps to take critical and more problematic areas forward. Immediately preceding the ninth session of the CSD in April 2001 the first global preparatory committee for 2002 will begin.

*Figure 3. Preparations for Earth Summit 2002*

	Activities
<b>National</b> <i>Late 2000 - Spring 2001</i>	National preparations will be coordinated by national multi-stakeholder committees for sustainable development - to begin to define national agendas and undertake a review of progress. Public consultations and meetings, previous National Reports to the CSD and National Strategies for Sustainable Development will all help to inform this process. The UN CSD has suggested four national activities, in particular countries are asked to define 4- 5 national targets (by April 2001) to take domestic sustainable development forward.
<b>Regional</b> <i>Spring - Winter 2001</i>	Regional meetings of governments and other major groups will seek to build consensus over critical issues for progressing regional sustainable development - identifying areas of priority action and highlighting local examples of good practice. The processes will be informed by roundtables of regional experts, which will seek to highlight problems, solutions and priorities, as well as to set targets. Sub-regional processes may also contribute to this process.
<b>Global</b> <i>Late 2001 - Summer 2002</i>	Immediately after the ninth CSD (15 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup> April 2001) the first Global Preparatory Committee (PrepComm I) meeting will take place. The UN Secretary General will produce a global report on progress for the second PC, as well as reports on the outcomes of the regional and national review processes. By 2002 UNEP is planning to produce Global Environment Outlook 3 - a thirty year review on global environmental issues. Other intergovernmental and international institutions will also input to the process, along with major groups.

Primarily the Summit offers an opportunity to strengthen the global commitment to sustainable development. Ratification of agreements, such as the Kyoto and Biosafety Protocols, along with other outstanding agreements, such as Persistent Organic Pollutants and on Migratory and Straddling Fish Stocks, could be a part of this commitment.

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The Summit will also have to secure innovative and increased funds for sustainable development. This will include additional aid, debt relief and enhanced access to Foreign Direct Investment. The international architecture will also be reviewed to consider areas for improvement, to enhance coordination, build capacity and accountability, and to develop concrete and lasting programmes. The Summit could not only address problems with Agenda 21 but also tackle new, critical issues that are facing the world in the 21st Century.

### *Beyond the Summit*

Clearly the more people and organizations who are willing to contribute to the Earth Summit process and willing to encourage others to do so the more likely that the process will begin to build momentum. We each have a right, a role and a responsibility to contribute to sustainable development. Before Rio it was said that;

*"while the Earth Summit will constitute a test of nations willingness to institute fundamental changes in economic behavior, the challenges ahead will be far more daunting. Change is seldom easy"*

Sustainable development is a dynamic process, and it's one that will continue to evolve and grow as lessons are learnt and ideas re-examined. By reinvigorating the spirit of Rio we can begin to move to a deeper and broader level of sustainability.



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