

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is an approach to managing human interaction with the natural world – balancing economic and social development with the capacity of the planet to sustain secure, predictable access to the necessities of life for present and future generations.

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”
– *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*

The Brundtland Report, 1987

By providing a framework to pursue economic and social development while respecting the environment, sustainable development promotes conditions leading to a higher quality of life for more of the world’s population over the long term.



Building a sustainable way of life requires integrated action on economic, environmental and social issues:

Economic Development – Today’s global economic system requires an inclusive, integrated approach that fosters responsible long-term development and embraces all communities. Economic development provides the necessary wealth to invest in protecting the environment, education, science and technology, and in maintaining health and well-being.

Conserving Natural Resources and the Environment – Human security, prosperity and well-being depend on a healthy environment. The sustainable development of natural resources, pollution prevention, and the conservation of natural habitats are central to conserving our environmental heritage, reducing poverty, and improving quality of life.

Social Development – The basic needs of the world’s population must be addressed while respecting cultural and social diversity, and the rights of workers. Development must also be undertaken in a manner that empowers all members of society to play a role in determining their own future.

Recent international actions on trade, international financing, aid effectiveness and private sector investment that drive economic growth all contribute to reducing poverty – an integral component of sustainable development. These actions have helped build momentum for concerted international action on sustainable development.

In our increasingly interdependent world, Canada has a role to play in advancing sustainable development. Canada recognizes that economic, environmental and social goals can only be achieved if the world is healthy, prosperous and environmentally sustainable.

Canada continues to work domestically and internationally to promote practical measures to achieve sustainable development, and to promote necessary partnerships with various sectors of society in support of sustainable development.

For more information about Canada at the WSSD, consult Canada’s World Summit Web site at www.wssd-smdd.gc.ca.

“Our biggest challenge in this new century is to take an idea that seems abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into a daily reality for all the world’s people.”

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations

