



Quotes about Sustainable Development, training course Sustainable Project Management  
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Sustainability is: a capacity, a potential, an ability rather than a given fact; the capacity of the organization to fulfill its mission and reach its vision; more than survival: growth, development, impact; two fundamental issues: the problem of the environment degradation that so commonly accompanies economic growth and the need for such growth to alleviate poverty.

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The idea of sustainability dates back more than 30 years... It was a key theme of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. The concept was coined explicitly to suggest that it was possible to achieve economic growth and industrialization without environmental damage.

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Belief in the opportunity to consume without limits in an ecologically limited world is a powerful driving force increasing global risk.

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Some less-developed countries see sustainable development as an ideology imposed by the wealthy industrialized countries to impose stricter conditions and rules on aid to developing countries. Other critics suggest that the concept does not give enough attention to the poor, who suffer most from environmental degradation.

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The most violent criticism often comes from those criticising growth. According to them, unlimited growth is impossible; sustainable growth is therefore an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms.

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In complete contrast, others find that the concept is only for rich countries. Now that they are developed, why are they imposing a restrictive vision of development on emerging countries who aspire to the same level of development?

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Sustainable development will not be brought about by policies only: it must be taken up by society at large as a principle guiding the many choices each citizen makes every day, as well as the big political and economic decisions that have. This requires profound changes in thinking, in economic and social structures and in consumption and production patterns.

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Big companies in particular have adopted this term to greenwash (exactly as the word suggests) their image. NGOs and associations regularly denounce many companies' inappropriate campaigns. The same problem exists with politicians who have adopted the concept without acting on it. This is why the concept is increasingly suffering from negative public opinion; it is sometimes rightly perceived as an illusion.

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The goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.

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In 1980, the International Union for the Conservation of Natural Resources (IUCN) published the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) which provided a precursor to the concept of sustainable development. The Strategy asserted that conservation of nature cannot be achieved without development to alleviate poverty and misery of hundreds of million of people and stressed the interdependence of conservation and development in which development depends on caring for the Earth. Unless the fertility and productivity of the planet are safeguarded, the human future is at risk.

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In June 1992, the first UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) was held in Rio de Janeiro and adopted an agenda for environment and development in the 21st Century. Agenda 21: A Programme of Action for Sustainable Development contains the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which recognizes each nation's right to pursue social and economic progress and assigned to States the responsibility of adopting a model of sustainable development; and, the Statement of Forest Principles. Agreements were also reached on the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. UNCED for the first time mobilized the Major Groups and legitimized their participation in the sustainable development process. This participation has remained a constant until today. For the first time also, the lifestyle of the current civilization was addressed in Principle 8 of the Rio Declaration. The urgency of a deep change in consumption and production patterns was expressly and broadly acknowledged by State leaders.

Agenda 21 further reaffirmed that sustainable development was delimited by the integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars.

The spirit of the conference was captured by the expression "Harmony with Nature", brought into the fore with the first principle of the Rio Declaration: "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature".

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On 24th December 2009 the UN General Assembly adopted a Resolution (A/RES/64/236) agreeing to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 - also referred to as 'Rio+20' or 'Rio 20'. The Conference seeks three objectives: securing renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assessing the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and addressing new and emerging challenges. The Member States have agreed on the following two themes for the Conference: green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and institutional framework for sustainable development

Since UNCED, sustainable development has become part of the international lexicon. The concept has been incorporated in many UN declarations and its implementation, while complex has been at the forefront of world's institutions and organizations working in the economic, social and environmental sectors. However, they all recognize how difficult it has proven to grant the environmental pillar the same recognition enjoyed by the other two pillars despite the many calls by scientists and civil society signalling the vulnerability and precariousness of the Earth since the 1960s.