

GLOSSARY

AGENDA 21

At the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, 49 countries adopted a set of 21 commitments in favour of sustainable development for the 21st century. This document is commonly called Action 21. Agenda 21 concerns the implementation of these 21 commitments, but at the local level. Local governments and businesses can also adopt Agenda 21s, and some have already done so, transposing the international recommendations agreed upon at Rio to their local level.

Definition inspired by and adapted from the website www.dictionnaire-environnement.com/agenda_21_ID750.html

BIODIVERSITY

Syn. biological diversity. Diversity of all living organisms at all levels: ecosystems, species, populations, individuals and genetic. The concept was popularized by E.O. Wilson, considered the father of sociobiology.

Definition inspired by and adapted from the website www.dictionnaire-environnement.com/biodiversite_ID833.html

BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) is nicknamed for Gro Harlem Brundtland, a medical doctor and the first woman prime minister of Norway. She created the Commission in 1983 and chaired it until 1996, fighting for the principle of sustainable development. In April 1987, the WCED published *Our Common Future*, also known as the Brundtland Report. The Commission's recommendations led to the holding of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

Definition inspired by and adapted from the website www.dictionnaire-environnement.com/commission_brundtland_ID2617.html

CONSERVATION

Conservation means the continuing protection and management of natural resources in accordance with principles that assure their optimum long-term economic and social benefits and that minimize their impact on the environment.

Inspired by the website www.dictionnaire-environnement.com/conservation_ID2172.html

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

Sustainable consumption is the use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle of the service or product so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations.

Oslo Symposium on Sustainable Consumption, Norway, 1994

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Within the scope of the proposed measures, “sustainable development” means development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is based on a long-term approach which takes into account the inextricable nature of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of development activities.

From the *Sustainable Development Act* passed by Quebec in 2006,
Chapter 1, Preliminary Provisions

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. (...) In its broadest sense, the strategy for sustainable development aims to promote harmony among human beings and between humanity and nature.

From Chapter 2 of *Our Common Future*, The World Commission on Environment and Development

SUSTAINABILITY

Financial, organizational, social, political or environmental benefits resulting over time from an action, project or program.

From the website www.dictionnaire-environnement.com/durability_ID2652.html

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The purpose of l’ERE is to develop a world population that is aware of and concerned

about the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solving current problems and preventing new ones from developing.

Claude Villeneuve, *Qui a peur de l'an 2000?*, 1998, p.113

EQUITY

In sustainable development, equity and efficiency are intertwined but equity dominates; equity among nations, individuals and generations. Equity aims to fulfill the basic needs of present and future human communities (water, food security, education, health, employment), to improve the quality of life (medical care, social services, shelter, culture and welfare), to respect human rights and freedoms (participation in the different decision-making processes, status of women, freedom of the press, conflict-resolution and freedom of expression) and to strengthen new forms of renewable energy (wind, solar, geothermal).

Definition inspired by and adapted from the websites fr.wikipedia.org/ and strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/site/sd-dd.nsf/en/sd00117e.html

GOVERNANCE

In the context of sustainable development, governance is a collective decision-making process not systematically involving a situation of authority. Good governance is characterized notably by participation, transparency, accountability, efficiency and equity. It ensures that political, social and economic priorities are rooted in broad social consensus. It is the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority in order to manage all these aspects of a country's business.

Definition inspired by and adapted from the website www.dictionnaire-environnement.com/governance_ID1918.html

PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE

The precautionary principle stipulates that "when there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." It was proclaimed in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992).

Definition inspired by and adapted from the website www.dictionnaire-environnement.com/principe_de_precaution_ID1923.html