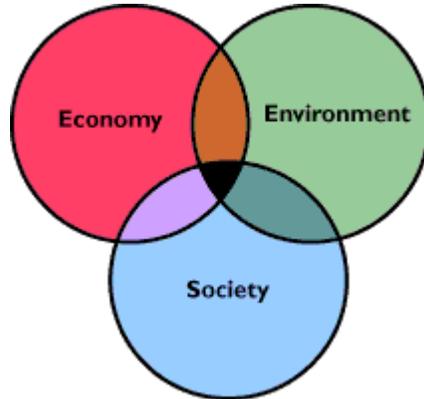


Sustainability Definitions

"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."

Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future* (1987)



"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

Aldo Leopold, "A Land Ethic," from *Sand County Almanac*

"Then I say the earth belongs to each... generation during its course, fully and in its own right, no generation can contract debts greater than may be paid during the course of its own existence."

Thomas Jefferson, 1789

"Sustainability is equity over time. . . . As a value, it refers to giving equal weight in your decisions to the future as well as the present. You might think of it as extending the Golden Rule through time, so that you do unto future generations as you would have them do unto you."

Robert Gilman, Director, Context Institute

"A transition to sustainability involves moving from linear to cyclical processes and technologies. The only processes we can rely on indefinitely are cyclical; all linear processes must eventually come to an end."

Dr. Karl Henrik-Robert, MD, founder of The Natural Step, Sweden

"Leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm life or the environment, make amends if you do."

Paul Hawken, *The Ecology of Commerce*

"Sustainable development describes a process in which the natural resource base is not allowed to deteriorate. It emphasizes the hitherto unappreciated role of environmental quality and environmental inputs in the process of raising real income and the quality of life."

D.W. Pearce, *World Without End* (1993)

Actions are sustainable if:

- there is a balance between resources used and resources generated*
- the viability, integrity and diversity of natural systems are restored and maintained*
- they lead to local and regional self-reliance*
- they help create and maintain community and a culture of place.*
- each generation preserves the legacies of future generations.*

David McCloskey, Professor of Sociology, Seattle University

"Sustainable development...(is) the process of building equitable, productive and participatory structures to increase the economic empowerment of communities and their surrounding regions."

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility

"Sustainability is: Progressive social betterment without growing beyond ecological carrying capacity."

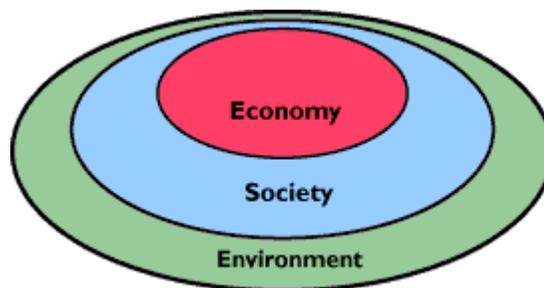
Herman Daly.

"Sustainability equals conservation plus stewardship plus restoration."

Sim Van der Ryn, (1994)

Sustainable design is the careful nesting of human purposes within the larger patterns and flows of the natural world.

David Orr



"In many American children's stories (and other stories too), the characters live "happily ever after." Sustainability is the art of `ever after,' the art of assuring that people in the future will have what they need to lead fulfilling lives."

Jim Farrell

Both images on this page come from <http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/>

Sustainability means living within the resources of the planet without damaging the environment now or within the future. It also means having an economic system that provides a genuine quality of life, rather than depending on increased consumption.
West London Friends of the Earth

Sustainability is the economic and social changes that promote human prosperity and quality of life without causing ecological or social damage. It is a new way of thinking about an age-old concern: ensuring that our children and grandchildren inherit a tomorrow that is at least as good as today, preferably better. We want to make sure that the way we live our lives is sustainable - that it can continue and keep improving for a long, long time.
City of Seattle

Sustainability means creating a world in which we have:

- 1) A positive ecological and sociological footprint (meaning we leave behind wetlands, not toxic waste dumps; healthy, developmentally appropriate educational systems, not ineffective relics from the Victorian era)*
- 2) Cross-sectoral coordination amongst the public and private sectors to nurture global economic development and growth (not physical growth, but in standard of living) to occur within our ecological limits, while delivering social justice*
- 3) An alignment of the different levels of our individual and collective consciousness so that we can create, maintain, and healthily evolve all of this.*

Barrett Brown (2004), Integral Institute for Sustainability

Environmental sustainability is defined as preserving the ecosystem while allowing the poor to improve their economic condition.”

Jeffrey Sachs 2002

Improving the quality of life for all living beings within the capacity of nature to provide that life.

Paul Hawken

A sustainable society is one that can persist over generations, one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support.

Donella Meadows, et.al. “Beyond the Limits” (1992).

I have used the word perennial rather than sustainable because I want to imply more than just holding the line, more than just preventing further degradation. Living systems are not static, they are continually unfolding into new forms. This means the consequences of our effects on the biosphere don't die away, they will continue to resonate into the indefinite future. If we are to thrive in perpetuity, we and our economic systems must consciously rejoin the jostling, creative melée that is the adventure of life on Earth.

Geoff Davies “Economia”

Sustainable development means achieving a quality of life (or standard of living) that can be maintained for many generations because it is: 1. socially desirable, fulfilling people's cultural, material, and spiritual needs in equitable ways; 2. economically viable, paying for itself, with costs not exceeding income; 3. ecologically sustainable, maintaining the long-term viability of supporting ecosystems.

IUCN - World Conservation Union (1993).

Sustainability: A new way of life and approach to social and economic activities for all societies, rich and poor, which is compatible with the preservation of the environment.

Saburo Kato (1994)

Sustainability is about "thinking about forever."

Griffith University, UNEP

Sustainability is more a symbol than a scientific concept. It's the focus for a new debate about the shape of the future, a signpost pointing to a general direction that we must take while the debate is engaged about the best path forward. Commitment to human and societal wellbeing is as important as ecological commitment to the planet. We must preserve a planet fit to live on and also create organisations that sustain the quality of our social life.

Professor Dexter Dunphy, University of Technology, Sydney (2002).

Sustainability means protecting our options. To protect our options we must place as much (or more) emphasis on maintaining and restoring ample, healthy 'stocks' and 'flows' of 'natural capital' as we do on protecting financial capital. Natural capital includes all of the environmental resources and ecological processes that sustain life on earth.

Bob Doppelt "Leading Change toward Sustainability" (2003)

If you get right down to it, sustainability is really the study of the interconnectedness of all things.

Barbara Lither

Achieving the ecological balance which allows economic prosperity and social equity to be achieved across generations.

David Schaller

Development that provides real improvements in the quality of human life and at the same time conserves the vitality and diversity of the earth.

Caring for the Earth

When we follow nature's rules, growth is good, the question before us is not growth versus no growth, It is: what would good growth look like? And this is a question of intent, of design. What if we grow health instead of sickness, home ownership instead of indigence, education instead of ignorance?

William McDonough "The Next Industrial Revolution"

Sustainable development is the lightest footprint possible on the biosphere and, most importantly, a consciousness that can sustain it.

Ken Wilber (Author, Philosopher, President of The Integral Institute)

The ability to sustain the things that are essential to a meaningful and happy existence, now and forever, for ourselves and for those for whom we care.

Stephen Forsyth

Sustainability is acting, with good grace, like we plan to stay.

Stephen Forsyth