

COURSE n°9: Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is defined as 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. Sustainable development simply means that the needs of the present generation should be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is about safeguarding the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity and is based on the principles of democracy, gender equality, solidarity, the rule of law, and respect for fundamental rights, including freedom and equal opportunities for all. It aims at the continuous improvement of the quality of life and well-being on earth for present and future generations. To that end it promotes a dynamic economy with full employment and a high level of education, health protection, social and territorial cohesion, and environmental protection in a peaceful and secure world, respecting cultural diversity.

Sustainable development means enhancing the economic, social, and environmental well-being of people and communities, achieving a better quality of life for our own and future generations: In ways that promote social justice and equality of opportunity; and in ways that enhance the natural and cultural environment and respect its limits - using only our fair share of the earth's resources and sustaining our cultural legacy. Sustainable development is the process by which we reach the goal of sustainability. 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. Therefore if the world must meet both the needs of the present and future generations, it is now more important than ever to put into practice the concept of sustainable development, which integrates economic growth, social development, and protection of the environment. To achieve this, global strategies for economic development that can lift low-income countries having per capita income of less than USD 767 out

of abject poverty, illiteracy, economic stagnation, environmental degradation, and technological exclusion inter alia Adesina-Uthman

Sustainable development is a phrase we hear echoing around from time to time to underline our ideal vision of the future – free of all the problems that the inhabitants of the earth tackle today. Depletion of natural resources, population growth, Gender inequality, energy, ecosystem, food security, industry, and unequal distribution of wealth, etc are issues that temper environmental quality and its sustainability.

Issues on population and human Resources:

- World population reached 6 billion in 1999 and could pass the 8 billion mark by 2025.
- The most rapid population growth is in the South, e.g. Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- The degree of consumption of resources per capita differs markedly between the South and the North.
- Health status, education levels, and social conditions also differ greatly between the South and the North.

Issues on Food Security:

- There is widespread hunger today despite the dramatic increase in the world production of cereal, meat, and milk which have more than tripled since 1950.
- The increase in food production has been due to new methods of farming, including the use of new seed varieties, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and increased irrigation but the cost of these inputs is beyond the reach of most small farmers.
- New methods of farming have had detrimental effects on the environment.
 - o New seed varieties are not generally resistant to pests and require large amounts of water and chemicals.
 - o Overuse of chemical pesticides and fertilizers has led to widespread pollution of water and biological magnification of these chemicals in food chains.
 - o Irrigation has also caused salinisation and alkalinisation of soils.
- Farm subsidies in the North result in over-production. Not only does this overuse land, but it also affects opportunities for other countries to produce and sell food.

The international debts of many countries in the South have led to the use of land to produce cash crops for export. This pushes subsistence farmers onto marginal lands which in turn contributes to widespread soil degradation. The Urban Challenge:

- Over 50% of the world's population lives in urban communities.
- Most cities in the South have more than quadrupled in population in the last 30 years.
- Population pressure has resulted in inadequate urban infrastructure and services.
- The most serious problems are unemployment, poor housing conditions, and environmentally and socially related health concerns.

Issues on Energy:

- By the year 2025 global energy consumption will have increased by 40% over 1980 figures.
- The most used energy sources for commercial energy production and consumption are fossil fuels, such as oil and gas; o hydropower; or nuclear power; and biomass fuels (wood, crop residues, and dung) on which the majority of people in the South rely for their energy supplies.
- Renewable energy amounts to only 21% of the total energy consumed worldwide. Solar, wind, geothermal, and alternative energy sources, such as ethanol, have found only limited, small-scale use.
- The dependence on finite fossil fuels, has resulted in four major problems: o large-scale climatic change resulting from the emission of carbon dioxide (Greenhouse Effect);
 - o urban air pollution and acidification as a result of the release of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide during combustion;
 - o depletion of resources; and o international conflict.
- Nuclear power also causes problems:
 - o health risks to workers involved in its production and disposal of the wastes; o health risks to the community;

o risk of catastrophic accident; and

o, need for very strict security.

Issues in Industry:

- Industrialization brings economic growth but also leads to a shift in population from rural to urban areas and escalating pollution of air, sea, land, and rivers.
- The pattern of industrialization in the South now mirrors that of the industrialized nations and presents similar social and environmental problems.
- The ability of developed countries to deal with such problems as the disposal of hazardous wastes and industrial pollution has not been as great as in the industrialized nations due to cost, trade, and technological inequalities between countries