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The aim of sustainable development is to meet the current needs of this generation without compromising the needs of future generations. 2.

Definition of sustainable development Sustainable development is a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations (World Commission on Environment and Development [WEEK] in De Beer and Cornwall, 2010: 16).

The main idea in this definition is that development should meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The sources of the world are limited, and examples include people, money, the natural environment and the man-made environment (De Beer and Cornwall, 2010: 16). The term itself is much-debated with dozens of different definitions provided by different writers. It attempts to link the debates and discussions around the term 'development' with the debates and discussions around the idea of 'environmentalism'.

One straightforward definition which is often used is that presented in the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as the Brundtland Commission), which saw sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Reagan, 2006: 64). Sustainable development can be viewed as a social movement, as it is a group of people with a common ideology who try together to achieve certain general goals (Skates et al, 2005). 3.

The origin of sustainable development The idea of sustainable development evolved between 1972 and 1992 through a series of international conferences and initiatives. The 1972 United Nations [UN] Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment was the first great international meeting on how human activities were harming the environment and putting us at risk. The 1980 World Conservation Strategy, which was a collaboration between the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the UN Environment Program and the World Wildlife Fund, promoted the idea of environmental protection in the self-interest of human beings.

In 1987, the UN-sponsored Brundtland Commission released "Our Common Future", a report that captured widespread concerns about the environment and poverty in many parts of the world and made the term sustainable development popular. The Brundtland report provided the momentum for the landmark 1992 Rio Summit that laid the foundations for the global institutionalizing of sustainable development. Marking the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm conference, the Rio Summit produced the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, a global plan of action for sustainable development. Drainage and Murphy, 2010: 7-8). Sustainable development represents integration, understanding and action on the complex interconnections that exist between the environment, economy, and society. It is not a balancing act or a playing off one issue against the other, but recognizes the interdependent nature of these three pillars (Drainage and Murphy, 2010: 6). 4. Sustainable development challenges As the world's population continues to increase, and standards of

living improve, there is serious danger of a permanent change to the global environment.

Human activities have led topollution, deforestation, and soil erosion Just to name a few. There is a need to achieve a level of development that also sustains the environment for future generations. The majority of the poor people in developing countries, and especially in Africa, live in rural areas. They face an issue of trying to find a balance between making a secure income from nature and conserving enough from nature to ensure that their children will also be in a position to have a secure source of income.

Their struggle to survive in harsh natural conditions is made more difficult by factors beyond their control, such as hardships posed by nature and external forces, such as the urban demand for rural produce, which put extra strain on the natural resources. But developing countries and the way in which they are using resources are not the only threats to sustainable development. The developed world is an equally large threat, if not a larger one, because their approach to development is based on large-scale industrialization.

The development processes taking place in these countries often have a global impact on the environment (De Beer and Cornwall, 2010: 77-96).

Below are a few examples of the impact humans have on the environment:

4. 1 . Deforestation Deforestation is the permanent destruction of indigenous forests and woodlands. Forests are cut down for many reasons, but most of them are related to money or to people's need to provide for their families. The biggest driver of deforestation is agriculture. Farmers cut forests to provide more room for planting crops or grazing livestock.

Logging companies, which provide the world's wood and paper products, also cut down countless trees each year. Forests are also cut as a result of growing populations. But not all deforestation is intentional. Some is caused by a combination of human and natural factors like wildfires and overgrazing, which may prevent the growth of young trees (National Geographic Online, 2012). Deforestation causes heightened human suffering by reducing the carrying capacity of the soil and thus impairing the long-term prospects of sustained development in many areas (De Beer and Cornwall, 2010: 90).

Tropical countries are the most common victims of deforestation, as well as countries such as Indonesia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, China, Liberia, Malaysia, Laos, and Ghana, all of whom have lost large amounts of their rainforest's (How to Prevent, 2012). Examples of short-term effects are flooding and erosion. Flooding is caused because the remaining trees and vegetation are unable to soak up all the rain water that has fallen during a rain storm. Erosion occurs cause when trees are cut down the rain washes away some of the nutrients from the soil.

Without vegetation the sun heats up the soil and, as a result, it will lose some nutrients through evaporation. The loss of nutrients makes it difficult for vegetation to grow. A wall tombstone contribute to the loss of vegetation. In the long term effects are climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Climate change occurs due to an increase of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide. Trees and other vegetation consume carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. When there is a decrease in live trees, there is no way of controlling the amount of carbon dioxide added to the atmosphere.

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An increase in carbon dioxide will increase the temperature of the earth and will therefore alter the weather. Large forests contain many types of animals and plants and other species. Deforestation ruins the habitat of the animals and plants causing them to die or move deeper into the forests. Because we are destroying plants and animals we could be destroying cures and medicines to many diseases our world faces (Raffle, 2012).

4. 2. Pollution
Pollution is the contamination of air, soil, or water by the discharge of harmful substances.

Pollution prevention is the reduction or elimination of pollution at the source instead of at the end, where the impact is felt most. This occurs when raw materials, water, energy and other resources are used more efficiently, when less harmful substances are substituted for hazardous ones, and when toxic substances are removed from the production process. By reducing the use and production of hazardous substances, and by working more efficiently we protect human health, strengthen our economic well-being, and preserve the environment (The National Pollution Prevention Roundtable [npa], 2012).

A major cause of pollution in Africa is the misuse of pesticides. Used properly, these can be extremely effective, but often too much is applied and the necessary precautions are not taken. This, in turn, kills the natural predators of insects as well as the insects that pollinate crops. It also encourages the evolution of insects that are resistant to the pesticide. Excessive use of pesticides that end up in rivers or lakes causes the death of fish and annually poisons some 500 000 people who draw their water from polluted sources (Kerchief et al in De Beer and Cornwall, 2010: 94).

Increasing air pollution is another side effect of rapid urbanization and the accompanying growth in population (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in De Beer and Cornwall, 2010: 95). An example of contributing factor to air pollution is motor cars.

4. 3. Erosion

Erosion is the environmental process in which the Earth's surface is worn down by natural forces like running water, wind, glaciers and waves. Erosion breaks down rocks, mountains and land surfaces, and pieces are carried away by wind, rain or rushing rivers. Erosion is constantly reshaping the land around us (National Geographic Online, 2012).

The main type of erosion facing Africa today is soil erosion. Deforestation, collection of firewood, cultivation of the soil for farming purposes and the destruction of trees to get rid of the tsetse fly all help to remove vegetation and, as a result, the nutrients in the soil disappear. What remains is a thin layer of arable soil which is soon washed away by rain or exhausted by over cultivation. Africa's rainfall pattern contributes greatly to soil erosion, with most of the rainfall taking the form of destructive storms. The reason why rain is the main cause of soil erosion is because raindrops hit the earth at 50 kilometers per hour.

During the heavy storms experienced in many parts of Africa, 25 mm of rain falling within one hour can release enough energy to plough the soil to a depth of 250 mm. Where there are trees and other plants, soil erosion is kept within reasonable limits, but remove the vegetation, however, the rain will wash away tons of topsoil, reducing the carrying capacity of the land considerably (De Beer and

Cornwall, 2010: 94). . How to become more sustainable Sustainability is a state of mind and way of life.

Incorporating sustainability principles, concepts and approaches in both formal and informal education processes will help institutionalism these concepts and encourage their widespread adoption (Sustainable Communities Online, 2012). We need innovative solutions which bring into line economic performance, social equity and responsibility for the natural environment, and education is critical in paving the way towards such development. It opens people's minds to participation in social and political life, helps them find solutions to global problems, and communicates the value of living sustainably.