

*Sustainable Development
and the*

*World Summit
for Social
Development*

A contribution of the IISD
to the World Summit
for Social Development



Naresh C. Singh,
Vangile Titi, and
Richard Strickland

IISD

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Development and the World Summit for Social Development

*Conceptual and practical linkages
among sustainable development,
poverty eradication, productive
employment and social integration.*

*A contribution of the IISD to the
World Summit for Social Development*

Naresh C. Singh,
Vangile Titi, and
Richard Strickland

IISD

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL
DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

IIDD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Preface

Executive Summary 1

The WSSD and Sustainable Development

Introduction 10

Sustainable Development: From Concept to Practice 13

Priority Themes

Poverty 16

Social Integration 18

Productive Employment 21

Macro-economic Policies and Sustainable Social Development 25

Putting People First in Sustainable Development

Macro-Social Policy Changes 28

Empowerment for Sustainable Social Development 30

Appendix 1: List of Participants at IISD Sponsored Workshop 33

Appendix 2: Categories of Livelihoods for Sustainable Development 34

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper has benefited from comments provided by several IISD staff members and from inputs by participants at international workshops convened by IISD. The opinions expressed in the paper are, however, the authors' sole responsibility.

Naresh C. Singh

Vangile Titi

Richard Strickland

PREFACE

The International Institute for Sustainable Development is a non-profit private corporation established and supported by the Governments of Canada and Manitoba. Its mandate is to promote sustainable development in decision making within government, business, and the daily lives of individuals. IISD activities are organized within four program areas, namely, Business and Government, Trade and Investment, Communications and Partnerships and Poverty and Empowerment.

This contribution has been prepared after discussions with government representatives, the UN Secretariat for the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) and individuals, all of whom recognized the need for the preparatory process of the WSSD to build on the results of the Earth Summit and related developments. It draws from recent and on-going work at IISD including recent international workshops hosted by IISD on:

Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development

November 1-2, 1993; Toronto, Ontario

Sustainable Development, Poverty Eradication and Macro/Micro Policy Adjustments

December 2-4, 1993; Winnipeg, Manitoba

At the IISD international workshop held in Winnipeg, working group sessions held extensive discussions on the process and inputs to the Social Summit Preparatory Process. A list of participants to this workshop is attached as Appendix 1.

Background papers prepared for the above workshops are currently available and full proceedings will be available shortly.

This paper, which is intended to assist in the deliberations of the preparatory process, seeks to give an integrated perspective to the core issues of the WSSD. Issues discussed during UN deliberations leading up to the decision to hold the WSSD and the definition of its scope of work have been given due consideration and are highlighted in the following statements excerpted from UN documentation for the WSSD.

Conclusion of the High Level Ministerial Segment of the Economic and Social Council (UN document No. E/1993/102):

“Creative ways could be found to address the interaction between the social function of the State, market responses to social demands and the imperatives of sustainable development.”

Social Development Questions: Social Development (UN document No. E/1992/80):

“There are limits beyond which any economic advantage gained (from structural adjustment) is offset by the political instability generated and the danger it poses to social gains and new found liberties.”

The following document integrates these and other relevant issues of concern to the WSSD in the context of UNCED agreements and other fundamental principles of Sustainable Development. Contributions towards an action plan entitled "An Agenda For People" in support of sustainable social development are included as part of the Executive Summary.

Naresh C. Singh
IISD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our world is currently swept by a range of social, economic and environmental problems of crisis proportions. Even if the scale of ecological stress and human misery is no greater now than in the recent past, our collective awareness of circumstances around the globe is certainly greater and more informed than ever before in human history. All the greater the tragedy, then, that we have continuously failed to adequately address problems and pursue measures to alleviate the suffering and realize the full potential of the human experience on earth.

Yet amidst the perils of social disintegration and the faltering progress of development processes, hope can be found in the actions of the millions of women, men and youths actively dedicated to the enterprise of human development. Through their collective participation, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio helped identify the overriding crises of our time and initiated the process of transition from failed promise toward sustainable development. **The 1995 World Summit for Social Development (WSSD)** offers a vehicle for galvanizing the transition and pursuing the path toward sustainable social development.

The focus of the WSSD on social development represents a logical outgrowth of issues and concerns for human development identified in the course of the Earth Summit. It is critical to recognize the many laudable initiatives that were agreed at Rio and to question why so little has been achieved, why so much remains to be done to redress the social and environmental ills of a world system that remains striking for its lack of social justice and economic equity. Through the WSSD, relevant intersections of environmental policies, economic structures and social processes must be identified, indicating ways in which the basic principles of sustainable development can be applied in support of efforts toward social development and the fulfillment of human potential.

Sustainable development as a guiding concept integrates the needs of the world's population with the limits of the ecosphere, given current states of technology and social organization, to satisfy present and future demands. It implies a process of change guided by equity in which resource exploitation, investment, technological development and the evolution of institutions reflect the needs of both present and future generations. It depends fundamentally on inclusiveness, transparency and accountability in all areas of policy planning and

implementation, embodying the concepts ensuing from the conventions of the Earth Summit.

Global poverty, social disintegration, unemployment and economic crisis collectively impede progress toward social development. The complex causes of such phenomena require that efforts toward their resolution must be comprehensive and well-integrated with economic and social realities. A framework built upon the underlying principles of sustainable development will ensure that adopted policy measures will promote the environmental, social, economic, political and cultural integrity of our communities and our planet.

Poverty represents the lack of access to options and entitlements to economic, social, environmental, political and cultural resources. When compounded by inequality, poverty is accentuated by lack of access to physical resources, accumulated capital (human and physical) and productive technologies and information. The negative consequences of poverty contribute to social destabilization and the erosion of our capacity to bestow future generations a patrimony of sustainable development. Strategies to combat poverty must address the processes of impoverishment, actively diminishing access to options and entitlements, driven by environmental degradation, resource depletion, inflation, unemployment and debt.

Social integration implies a "reciprocity of practices" between actors through agreed relations of relative autonomy and dependence. Conceptually it reaffirms the importance of solidarity and social equilibrium identified through the Earth Summit as central to sustainable development. Current interacting issues arising from rapid population growth, increasing alienation of youth and escalating rates of unemployment, as well as localized ethnic conflicts and cases of civil disorder, underscore the urgency for policy attention promoting greater mutual cooperation and new kinds of partnerships based on processes of consensus. The need for respect of cultural diversity is now greater than ever. Strategies to promote social integration must include the construction of democratic structures. They must engage all peoples and governments in redefining the notion of security, away from that based upon sectarian and national prejudices toward one founded upon the satisfaction of human physical, political and spiritual needs, promoting cultural identity, autonomy and solidarity, participation, democracy and full human rights.

Productive employment is fundamental in its contribution to poverty alleviation, social integration and sustainable development. High rates of unemployment and underemployment and inadequate levels of information resources, basic social services and investment capital

effectively stifle the full development potential of communities and nations. National economic reforms and globalization processes have contributed to reduced employment security and pressure on wages around the world. Employment promotion policy must seek to balance environmental integrity, demand growth, economic stability, labor market efficiency and human resource development. Policy attention will be best directed toward small-scale production, informal sectors and rural employment opportunities, both for the associated direct anti-poverty effects and for the efficiency of production and development processes arising from the effective empowerment of small-scale producers, informal entrepreneurs and women, groups which have previously suffered particularly inequitable access to productive resources. Future productive employment in support of sustainable development must rely upon new partnerships between workers and employers, and must emphasize investment in human resource development.

The framework of sustainable development applied here allows us to break new ground by bringing in the roles of other major actors traditionally excluded from development strategies such as business and private enterprise, as well as issues of government and trade toward advancing sustainable social development. Business and the leaders of private sector enterprise have a major role to play in employment promotion toward sustainable development. Toward that end, the firm should emphasize human and natural resources as well as traditional physical and financial capital, and seek to meet the needs of itself and all its stakeholders affected by its business activities, from shareholders to customers, from suppliers to whole communities.

Government budgets are obviously key to a broader understanding of macroeconomic policy and its implications for sustainable social development. Reform of current budget processes and government revenue systems must seek to reverse incentive structures which currently promote unsustainable activities which degrade the environment and impede social development. The "greening" of taxes in many countries has begun to shift systems of budgeting toward increased support of sustainable development.

Trade is critically linked to economic expansion and sustainable development. While increased trade revenues are likely to promote national economic development, they also provide the government with greater capacity to monitor economic production and change along indicators of sustainable development and to extend the policy time frame toward more responsible economic decision making in

support of sustainable social development. Trade policy must address issues of equity and community integrity and attend to poverty, structural change, unemployment and government social development policy.

The issues that have been raised in the following document constitute some of the fundamental components of sustainable social development. The thrust of the WSSD should be towards endogenous people-centered sustainable social development. To that end, the WSSD needs to revisit the kinds of macro policy changes that may be required globally to facilitate the transition towards sustainable development at the national level taking into consideration the international factors that influence domestic policy choices and the key agents of change which include transnational corporations, multilateral institutions, international finance institutions, international non-government organizations and national governments.

The crisis facing nation states and the international community is economic, ecological and social. Approaches to economic crises and adjustment will require endogenous, multistakeholder processes that incorporate alternative strategies for negotiation and action involving all relevant parties on the basis of national interests, institutional capacities, resources and goals. Such discussions of all policy options free of initial presumptions contribute towards a participatory and inclusive approach to decision making, giving concrete expression to the objectives of social integration and cohesion. (p.14)

The WSSD also has to address the stark possibility that countries may currently be loaded with separate and unintegrated plans covering macroeconomic adjustment, environmental action plans, strategies for sustainable development and new action plans for social development. Such policy integration requires the identification of areas of common ground and the development of a strategy that incorporates, in new ways, current elements of national development plans, environmental impact assessments, macroeconomic adjustment strategies and social development action plans in support of the comprehensive objective of sustainable development. (p. 15)

This can be achieved in large measure through empowerment. Empowerment means building the capacity of local, national and international communities to respond to a changing environment. Empowerment for sustainable social development is necessary for the reversal of social disintegration, poverty and unemployment in this period of transition to 'a new world order' guided by sustainable principles of inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, maintenance

of ecological and cultural integrity, equity and social justice. The WSSD must suggest mechanisms to move the international community from the concept of empowerment to actual practice. For instance, current power holders have been exposed to what they can contribute towards the greater common good through the Earth Summit and need to be galvanized to action by the WSSD to empower themselves and others to take bold steps to make the transition to less hierarchical structures in their own longer term interests.

The following document aims to highlight the linkages between principles of sustainable development and processes that support poverty eradication, productive employment and social integration. The first section links the WSSD to the Earth Summit and highlights the way in which issues of poverty, consumption and production patterns, and national and international equity relate to sustainable development; reviews the underlying principles of sustainable development and the processes involved in moving from concept to practice, drawing upon the body of work conducted at IISD and elsewhere. The second section considers prominent themes central to the WSSD, i.e. poverty, social integration, productive employment and consequences of economic restructuring. Each theme is examined through the conceptual filter of sustainable development, with attention given to the causes and consequences of poverty, unemployment and social and economic disorder. Direction for future corrective action is defined for each theme based upon the promotion of the means and objectives of sustainable development. The concluding section introduces two elements of endogenous responses to problems of sustainable social development, options for macro policy changes and empowerment for sustainable development. We conclude that empowerment is vital to efforts of endogenizing strategies to deal with economic, socio-political and economic crises that foster unsustainable patterns of development which result in poverty, unemployment and lack of social integration.

In order to promote discussions at the WSSD focused on these issues, we offer below, contributions towards an 'Agenda For People'.

Sustainable social development is an integrated process of building human capacity to fight poverty, create productive employment and promote social integration, issues that reinforce either negative or positive impacts depending upon the dynamic of their interaction at any point in time. The realization of social development therefore requires an holistic and integrated consideration of policy alternatives that cannot be neatly categorized.

The challenge of social development is how to meet employment, food, economic, social, cultural, security and environmental needs of nations around the world. This objective can be advanced by the following priorities:

- Human resource development within nations based on the commitment to making people the central concern of all development policies and strategies;
- New mechanisms of addressing the debt burden which has increased poverty two-fold in the developing countries and is increasingly being felt in the developed countries;
- Identification of obstacles, national and international, economic and political, that impede the successful implementation of anti-poverty strategies such as primary health care, maternal health care, sanitation, credit schemes, etc.;
- Mechanisms of holding arms-producing countries accountable for assisting to sidetrack resources away from poverty eradication programs and moving towards a new notion of security which includes autonomy, solidarity, participation and full human rights;
- The new ethics of sustainable development based on equitable national, regional and international social, political and economic structures that will contribute to the definition of the new world order;
- A more comprehensive approach to dealing with poverty in terms of its understanding, solution and coordination of efforts among national and international institutions;
- Mechanisms of providing specialized education, skills and training supported by the new technological facilities and telecommunications;
- Mechanisms of strengthening values of mutual cooperation and forging new partnerships based on consensus processes;
- Support for the 'capture' and legitimization of traditional knowledge by governments and by multilateral institutions and integration of these into contemporary knowledge systems as desirable; and
- Investment in the capacity of people and nations to earn sustainable livelihoods.

Action steps can be derived from the principles of sustainable development to reverse the processes of impoverishment, support the expansion of productive employment and promote social integration toward the broader aim of social development. In the way that such actions cross over boundaries of policy and program design, they will operate in an integrated manner and yield synergistic results. Through the filter of sustainable development, elements of economic, political, ecological, social and cultural integrity can be incorporated into relevant policy making processes.

Among measures aimed to reverse impoverishment and eradicate poverty, the following may be considered key:

National policy level:

- Ensure women's equitable access to productive inputs (i.e., land, capital, technology);
- Institute comprehensive land reform and secure a system of property rights;
- Promote self-reliance in food, contributing to household security (e.g., nutrition, incomes);
- Support micro-scale initiatives by small-scale and informal sector producers;
- Improve the quality of shelter and community infrastructure to relieve environmental pressures of human settlements and promote sustainable communities.

Regional and international policy level:

- Coordinate relief and action policies around issues of transborder migration or settlements of refugees displaced by political turmoil and war;
- Reduce or write-off outstanding international debt and reverse the net outflow of capital from Southern to Northern economies, by appropriate trade and sustainable development principles;
- Raise the consciousness in Northern countries concerning patterns of consumption and the contribution of Northern lifestyles to global impoverishment;
- Promote efforts to "reduce, re-use and recycle" consumer goods.

Key measures for action to promote productive employment include the following:

National policy level:

- Provide equitable and relevant education and training for girls and women, and promote their equal access to employment opportunities;
- Tap local knowledge systems to make employment and job creation relevant;
- End discrimination against informal and small-scale sector production activities;
- Promote rural employment, especially non-farm production opportunities;
- Insure worker rights and maintain the social and political integrity of the labor force;
- Invest in employment opportunities promoting resource renewal;
- Promote labor-intensive technologies and productive systems where appropriate.

Regional and international policy level:

- Address the impact and equity of changing employment and salary levels during periods of economic adjustment;
- Examine the consequences of economically inspired migration and the drain on human capital levels in Southern economies;
- Research the employment effects of continued trends toward globalization of markets and production systems;
- Promote the integration and exchange of new information and technologies.

Leading issues for concerted policy action addressing social integration include the following:

National policy level:

- Support peaceful means of conflict resolution;
- Recognize and promote cultural diversity;
- Build sound legal systems that incorporate recognized principles of social justice;
- Promote participatory decision making and political processes;

- Foster community-level and cooperative initiatives for social development;
- Address the social, political and economic concerns arising from involuntary migration by displaced persons and refugees;
- Improve institutions of governance and increase the national capacity to implement policies;
- Provide youth with productive options and a vision of a stable and just future in society.

Regional and international policy level:

- Improve channels and institutions of regional cooperation addressing common issues of sustainable development;
- Examine the causes and international consequences of increasing involuntary migration and displacement;
- Intensify work supporting human rights;
- Develop a better international institutional framework for conflict resolution;
- Initiate international discussion on the mass informal arming of civilians and continue efforts to control the flow and escalation of military arms.

Means of Implementation

a) Financing

The actual costs will depend on specific strategies and programs agreed upon for implementation at the governmental level. However, action plans should not be based on assumptions of new and additional financing, but rather focus on a reorientation of existing social structures and functions directed by strong political will and motivation.

b) Capacity building

Governments with the support of the relevant international and regional organizations should promote the development of adaptive capacities of indigenous human resources, particularly of women and youth, including technological know-how. Institutions involved in public education, including the media, schools and community groups should be strengthened. The capacity of national institutions to absorb and effectively utilize indigenous human capital should be promoted, with adequate incentives encouraging the retention and return of skilled nationals.

THE WSSD AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Development does not start with goods, it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline.....development can succeed only if it is carried forward as a broad 'popular movement of reconstruction' with primary emphasis on the full utilization of the drive, enthusiasm, intelligence and labour power of everyone.

E.F. Schumacher

It has become crucial to address issues of equity and social justice with particular attention to vulnerable groups as the root structural causes of problems of social development at the national and international levels, and to prioritize empowerment of the poor - a task which can only be achieved under conditions of peace and effective people's participation. The World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) will make headway in this, if it builds on the work done at the Earth Summit and other intergovernmental processes that have preceded it, by identifying areas within its mandate which need strengthening.

One of the objectives of WSSD is the promotion of social cohesion. After four decades of development and cold war politics, the world is experiencing rapid and complex social change towards a 'New World Order' thus far characterized by : (i) the dismantling of cold war power blocks that have resulted in the proliferation of regional conflicts and the lessening of tensions in other areas of historical conflict during this century; (ii) a growing perception that the process of global environmental degradation is of such importance that it should be dealt with at the levels of heads of state in a massive effort of international consensus building and (iii) an economic downturn that has resulted in the continued increase in both the number of people living in absolute poverty (growing to one third of the global population) and under- and unemployment in both developed and developing countries.

The Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro in June of 1992, was convened to elaborate strategies and measures to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation in the context of increased national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries. It was at Rio that the concept of Sustainable Development, as integrating economic, ecological and human well-being concerns, was propelled into the arena of global decision making, after the Brundtland

Commission had brought the issues to world attention five years earlier.

The products of the Earth Summit - Agenda 21, conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity, the Rio Declaration and the Statement of Forest Principles - were developed through a difficult and often controversial process of analysis, synthesis, and negotiations of material submitted by national governments, experts from both the UN system and non-government organizations, regional economic commissions, organizations representing industry, women, children, indigenous peoples and the scientific community, in four formal PrepCom sessions. By bringing together representatives of diverse social groups an environment was created for dialogue and consensus on issues crucial to the survival of mankind.

The Earth Summit, through Agenda 21, has provided a solid base of negotiated and agreed on text that provides a useful point of departure for any further negotiations during the preparations for the World Summit for Social Development. Some of Agenda 21 items that have both direct relevance and could be of value as a departure point for discussions by the WSSD PrepCom include:

Chapter 2 on International Cooperation to Accelerate Sustainable Development in Developing Countries and related Domestic Policies. This chapter talks about the new global partnership and changes to the international economic environment and highlights the need to overcome confrontation and to foster a climate of genuine cooperation and solidarity.

Chapter 3 on Combating Poverty, identifies poverty as a complex multidimensional problem with both national and international origins, and has as its long-term objective enabling all people to achieve sustainable livelihoods through empowerment and management-related activities, data and information gathering and dissemination, and international and regional cooperation. Issues of respect of cultural integrity and the rights of indigenous peoples, of capacity building and of participation are articulated in this chapter as crucial in making advances towards poverty eradication.

Chapter 4 on Changing Consumption Patterns, is primarily concerned with changes in unsustainable patterns of production and consumption that lead to environmental degradation, aggravation of poverty and imbalances in the development of countries. The role of women and households as consumers and the potential impacts of their combined purchasing power on the economy as well as problems of waste disposal, are highlighted.

Chapter 5 on Demographic Dynamics and Sustainability, identifies the growth of world population and production, on the one hand, and unsustainable consumption patterns, on the other, as placing severe stress on the life-supporting capacities of the planet and affecting the use of land, water, air, energy and other resources, thus creating conditions for conflict.

Chapter 30 on Strengthening the Role of Business and Industry, recognizes business and industry as playing a crucial role in creating opportunities for employment and livelihoods for nations.

In addition to Agenda 21, NGOs developed treaties which expanded on some of the elements not perceived to have been adequately addressed by the Earth Summit. The Treaties highlight some of the issues that are of relevance to the Social Summit and include:

- The Treaty on Alternative Economic Models that observes that the disparities in wealth, power and resources between the North and South and within nations are increasing and that the fundamental purpose of economic organization, which is to provide for the basic needs of a community, i.e., food, shelter, education, health, the enjoyment of culture, as opposed to the generation of wealth for its own sake, has been lost. The treaty also espouses the notion of people-centered and people-empowering models of development rooted in people's experiences, history and eco-cultural reality;
- The NGO Debt Treaty that calls for the structural transformation of development objectives, priorities and methods to deal with the problems of debt and of trade protectionism;
- The NGO Poverty Treaty that attributes poverty and environmental degradation to debt, militarism and the centralization of power to control natural resources, which thwart efforts at the reallocation of financial resources for sustainable livelihoods and ecological integrity. The Treaty on Consumption and Lifestyle serves as an extension of the poverty treaty and advocates for the linkage between Northern and Southern producers to ensure fair payment and support for environmentally sustainable production.

Sustainable Development: From Concept to Practice

IISD's work on impoverishment and sustainable development is based on the recognition that prevailing development patterns have not succeeded in efforts to eradicate poverty or protect natural resource systems from serious damage, whether locally or globally. Sustainable development contains two key concepts around which balance must be sought: that of "needs" among the world's population; and that of limitations associated with current states of technology and social organization and their relationship to the capacity of the ecosphere to satisfy present and future demands.

These concepts, regarded as the underpinnings of sustainable development, require us to address simultaneously the complex system of cause and effect within which problems of development and the ecosphere are linked. Since environmental stresses are linked to patterns of economic development, economics and ecology must be integrated in decision making processes both to protect the ecosystem and promote development. With increasing complexity, environmental and economic problems are linked to important social and political factors, which suggests the importance of power and influence within most environment and development challenges. Ultimately, the systemic features of environment-economy links operate at local, national, international and global levels.

New approaches are required in support of development processes that integrate production with resource conservation and enhancement, with assurances of adequate livelihoods and equitable access to resources. There needs to be a shift away from the conventional growth-centered concept of development, defined in terms of growth in economic value of the outputs of productive systems, toward a vision in which the well-being of people and the living systems of the planet take precedence, in support of a balance between the earth's regenerative systems, its resource stocks and the human demands placed on these systems and resources. As a comprehensive concept embracing all facets of human life, sustainable development reflects both the global threats to humanity and the opportunities to address the new era of transition toward fundamental global change that avoids the false distinction between national and global environmental problems.

The concept of sustainable development implies a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and exchange, and institutional change reflect both future and present needs. The notion of equity is central to sustainable development and implies a more

equal distribution of assets and the enhancement of capabilities and opportunities of the most deprived.

At the practical operational level, sustainable development would ensure:

- Self-sustaining improvements in productivity and quality of life of communities and societies including access to basic needs associated with education, health, nutrition, shelter, sanitation, employment and food self-sufficiency;
- Production processes that do not overexploit the carrying and productive capacities of the natural resource base and compromise the quality of the ecosystem, thus limiting the options of present and future generations; and
- Basic human rights, freedoms and security to participate in the political, economic, social and environmental spheres of their communities and societies.

Three sets of indicators become relevant: (i) maintenance of a constant natural capital stock including preservation of the renewal potential of natural resources, combined with maintenance of the environmental sink capacity to assimilate wastes, sewage and emissions; (ii) improvements in the quality of life through entitlements to the means of production (e.g., land, credit, technology) and human security, i.e., political and social organization, services, and access to basic needs satisfaction for nutrition, shelter, clothing and sanitation; and (iii) economic development as a process addressing problems of both underconsumption and overconsumption.

The concept of sustainable development is thus far the best framework available within which to address issues central to social development encompassing economic integrity (including sustainable livelihoods), ecological integrity, cultural integrity, political integrity and social integrity (i.e., social self-determination). Taken together, these foster the conditions necessary for promoting human development and thereby realizing security defined in its broadest sense. Principles of sustainable development, developed by the Brundtland Commission and further refined through the UNCED process, provide a filter through which progress toward social development can be monitored. These principles seek to insure that:

- All processes of social, economic, ecological and political development are inclusive and transparent to allow for the participation of all interested parties;

- Decision makers are accountable to the people;
- All development decisions take into consideration the integrity of the ecological base and the cultural integrity of all peoples and communities;
- Development processes are equitable, providing for fairness in the distribution of resources with intragenerational and intergenerational equity; and
- Processes of development are based on social justice pertaining to the ethics, values and morals of individuals and communities.

PRIORITY THEMES

Poverty

A world characterized by endemic poverty will always be prone to ecological, political and social catastrophes. Poverty reduces people's capacity to use resources in a sustainable manner, intensifying pressure on the ecosystem. Reversal of negative growth trends and a rise in per capita incomes in developing countries are fundamental preconditions for eliminating absolute poverty. Yet the content of growth itself must also change, becoming less material- and energy-intensive and more equitable in its impact. The entire process of economic development must be more soundly based upon the realities of the stock of capital sustaining it.

Within the context of developing countries, absolute poverty measured against some specific minimum level of per capita income or consumption (associated with the maintenance of a minimal standard of living and necessary caloric intake) provides the most relevant index when relating economic development to poverty eradication. In general, poverty, compounded by measures of inequality, will be accentuated by lack of physical resources, shortages of accumulated capital (both physical and human), lack of access to productive technologies, and inefficiencies in the broader economy. As such, a condition of poverty can be characterized as a lack of access to options and entitlements that are economic, social, political, cultural and environmental.

Despite international attention given to reducing or eliminating poverty, the numbers of poor people continue to rise at alarming rates, while per capita incomes fall in many parts of the developing world, most notably in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and parts of Latin America. Advances have been made in health and education and other aspects of human resource development, i.e. the fight against many basic childhood diseases. However, the increasing incidence of poverty worldwide, characterized by rising poverty rates and declining performance along a range of social indicators, will hamper or eliminate progress towards social development as the capacity is lost to increase fundamental services to the poor such as basic education (especially of girls), primary health care, clean water, nutrition and family planning.

The negative consequences of poverty are insidious and far reaching, serving to destabilize societies and erode the capacity of the present generation to bestow a legacy of sustainable development upon future

generations. The incidence of poverty reflects both societal and global inequities in the distribution of political and economic assets, threatening the maintenance of sustainable livelihoods and diminishing personal security. It also exacerbates the marginalization of people as vulnerable groups and compounds their disempowerment and alienation from basic social and political processes. All this contributes to the breakdown of the social, economic and political interstices of local and national communities and worsens patterns of inequitable resource distribution at regional, national and global levels.

The poor are found in diverse socio-ecological communities throughout the world, from arid and semi-arid lands to humid rainforests, in river and lake basins, on estuaries and coasts, in mountain communities, on small islands, in the slums and shanty-towns of Third World cities, on large agricultural plantations and isolated small farms, and in the prairies and urban areas of the developed countries. They include peasants, landless rural laborers, those displaced by famine and war, nomadic and indigenous peoples, urban unemployed workers, slum and shanty-town dwellers, fishermen, petty traders, farmers, women, children and infants. The poor share characteristics of isolation from centers of information and trade, vulnerability to sudden environmental and economic changes, and lack of power and influence in decision making and political processes.

Strategies to combat poverty must draw on the understanding of the processes of impoverishment as active processes diminishing access to options and entitlements, driven by a number of global mechanisms including environmental degradation, resource depletion, inflation, unemployment and debt. These mechanisms have eroded safety nets and widened the gap between rich and poor nations, and between the rich and the poor within nations. Prevailing trade and industrialization patterns in developing countries, dependent upon imported technology and capital, have contributed to increased stress on natural resources. Resulting patterns of production and consumption have become incompatible with the long-term requirements of sustainable development, prompting increased landlessness, alienation from productive resources and migration to urban areas already under economic and environmental stress.

Changes in income and in the incidence of poverty are related to global economic developments, national economic policies and the nature of reforms currently associated with stabilization and structural adjustment programs. A new face of poverty, of poverty amidst affluence, is also emerging in the developed countries as industrial

depression continues, unemployment or labor retrenchment increases, and more and more workers and professionals are either employed or underemployed. At global and national levels, economic stagnation has contributed to impoverishment through such channels as falling terms of trade (reducing the value of export earnings), declining flows of international capital, and rising levels of debt. Ensuing economic contraction and efforts at fiscal restraint have precluded efforts to alleviate poverty. The conditions suffered by the poor have, in many instances, been exacerbated in the short-term by reform-inspired cuts in public expenditure to social services, reduction of consumer subsidies, introduction of user fees for public goods and services, and a decline in employment and real wages.

Human impoverishment relates to a reduction in: the availability or value of resources (e.g., economic, human, environmental) necessary to satisfy human needs and aspirations; the capacity to make adequate use of available resources (e.g., due to prolonged illness, malnutrition, lack of access to information); the autonomy to use resources and make decisions; the capacity to respond and innovate towards internal and external changes; and the capacity to sustain a future-directed orientation toward social options and natural resources.

Social Integration

The challenge of social development is how to meet employment, food, economic, social, security and environmental needs of millions of people around the world. The imperative for a renewed commitment to make people the central concern of all development policies and strategies for solidarity and for social equilibrium has been stressed throughout the Earth Summit process and needs reiteration in the WSSD.

Social integration as 'reciprocity of practices' between actors involves agreed-upon relations of relative autonomy and dependence between actors and does not necessarily presuppose cohesion or consensus. The engines for future sustained development will be people armed with the capacity to adapt and upgrade, with specialized education, skills and training and supported by the new technological facilities and telecommunications. Investment in human resources thus becomes an essential component of strategies for social integration.

In the developing countries, the complexity and interlinkages between issues of population, youth and unemployment now call for urgent and increased attention. By the year 2000, 700 million jobs will have to be created in the developing countries to meet demands by new entrants into the job market. The experience in developed countries

during the 1960s demonstrates that failure to do so will contribute to social discontent among youth, which may ultimately trigger violent conflict. Education and training still remains a potential instrument in reducing inequalities in the size and distribution of income and raising the productivity and earnings of citizens. It is crucial to structure education and training in such a way that it is contextual, provides job related knowledge and skills, and encourages the capacity to adapt.

The phenomenon of changing patterns of family structures is also becoming widespread in both developing and developed countries. In developing countries, mass migrations from rural to urban areas have contributed to the rapid increase in urban populations. The result has been the growth of megacities that are unmanageable and uninhabitable, experiencing critical environmental degradation and pushing to the limit their ability to sustain human life. The urban poor are the most vulnerable, living in squatter settlements located on flood plains, steep hillsides or adjacent to dangerous industries. In the developed countries, the progressive erosion of the social safety net and increasing unemployment and underemployment have contributed to the rise in social problems. The increase in maladjusted and poorly educated citizens, increased delinquency among children, and an increase in street crime, drug addiction, and school dropouts is notable.

The need to strengthen values of mutual cooperation and new kinds of partnerships based on consensus processes to meet demands for social integration in an efficient and equitable manner between nations, peoples and communities has become more pronounced as nations move towards regionalism. There are indications that the world is experiencing two contradictory processes: on the one hand, there is an increasing sense of belonging to a global community as an awareness of the unity of the globe is increased, and on the other hand, there is a growing rift in a social sense. The free trade areas between the United States and Canada, the European Common Market, and the South-East Asia Coalition may well be ushering in a new era of hostile trading and economic blocs, raising the possibility of an increase in protectionism in trade and exchange barriers with fewer possibilities for collaboration with non-member countries, thus further marginalizing the weaker developing countries.

Respect for cultural diversity is essential in this interdependent world. Culture strongly influences national economic performance, political cohesion at local and national levels, and creates the preservation of knowledge for development. The loss of local and traditional knowledge has implications for sustainable social development. The

revival of fundamentalist religions and sects worldwide, which are especially appealing to the powerless as a result of cultural dislocation and social marginalization, invoking ethnicity or racism for mobilization purposes, and discriminatory barriers that push economic or political marginalization along ethnic or religious lines have created fertile ground for ethnic or religious conflicts that have escalated into war and have brought about hardships to millions of people from Burundi to Bosnia.

The underlying causes of continued and potential ethnic and religious conflicts, wars and migration are associated with: inequitable social, economic and political structures at local, national and international levels; and issues of social justice, which have implications for women, indigenous people and people of color, and others who have no access to instruments of decision making, that is, the vulnerable groups in society.

The concept of global security has been built around sectarian and national prejudices and has produced threats to humanity through the arms race, militarization, poverty intensified by wasted resources, oppression, destruction and death caused by war. The post-cold war era has ushered in an entirely new perspective of security that has witnessed a decrease in global security through military means and an increase in individual insecurity with increased poverty, unemployment and ecological degradation.

The Earth Summit with its Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change demonstrated this new perspective with regards to the 'global commons'. This was achieved through the process of democratization of international affairs through the inclusion of individual citizens and private non-governmental institutions as actors in global change, making them both owners of and participants in processes of global responsibility, both directly and indirectly. The World Summit for Social Development can add value to this by engaging people and governments of the North and the South in a transformation of the notion of security into a strategy of human security involving the satisfaction of physical as well as political and spiritual needs, including cultural identity, autonomy and solidarity, participation, democracy and full human rights.

The emergence of democratic structures around the world is a prerequisite to reversing the trend towards social fragmentation. History has shown that the destruction of environmental resources, of life, of solidarity and of culture tends to be worst under authoritarian political structures. Conditions of participation, and of democratic freedoms tend to bridge social rifts.

Productive Employment

Attention to employment is imperative in efforts toward poverty alleviation, social integration and sustainable development, given the close relationship between employment, income generation and the sustaining of households and livelihoods. Communities and nations characterized by high levels of unemployment and underemployment and inadequate levels of access to information, basic social services and investment capital are hindered in efforts to achieve their development potential. Among the poorest are those with no significant accumulation of productive assets other than their own labor; policies and actions to increase their options for productive employment become paramount. At the same time, developed countries are experiencing the phenomenon of a slow and jobless recovery from recession. This causes concern for current and future measures of personal human security as well as national economic security, and raises serious questions over the sustainability of current employment strategies.

Efforts to boost employment might seek to utilize idle or underutilized human and/or physical resources, expand the productive resource base, or increase the productivity of local resources, while at the same time determine ways to respond to market opportunities and more fully mobilize the community. This suggests the way in which issues are linked and policies need to reinforce one another around demand growth, economic stability, labor market efficiency and human resource development.

Within the contemporary framework of international economic relations, wherein developing countries are frequently engaged in programs of financial reform and economic restructuring, it is important to consider the effects of policy change on employment and incomes in the short- and medium-term. Orthodox structural adjustment programs are likely to lead to reduced employment and real wages in the short-run as they seek to reduce overall domestic demand. Formal sector employment has grown more slowly, or even contracted, following initiation of adjustment-related reforms, contributing to rising unemployment and underemployment in the short-term. Such effects are likely to be compounded by rising rates of participation and depressed incomes in informal sector activities, especially when formal sector incomes are stagnating or falling. It is very important to consider the nature and intent of adjustment measures, and to shape them according to the characteristics specific to a particular country. Attention must be given to the consequences and alternatives for workers displaced by the reform process.

To promote expansion of productive employment opportunities in

developing countries, policy attention might be best directed toward small-scale producers, informal sectors and rural areas. As a commonly excluded group, women's central and cross-cutting roles in all these categories must be recognized. Since these groups comprise much of the low-income population, efforts directed toward them will significantly address concerns of poverty alleviation. They also represent key points of intervention in anti-poverty strategies, through which major gains can be made with limited resources, as demonstrated by the relative successes of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh and ORAP in Zimbabwe.

It is important to view the economic activity in small-scale and informal sectors as valid and valuable, comprising both production for subsistence and production for more traditionally commercial purposes along the lines of successful micro-enterprises. Promotion of small-scale enterprise is an important channel for supporting employment more broadly. Increasing access to credit is one of the most important ways to do this, especially for small-scale farmers, informal entrepreneurs and women who have frequently been discriminated against in past and current resource allocation practices. It is important to see the poor as actively engaged, as subjects rather than objects of the development process. As working people, they represent the initiators of development and can be empowered through their own employment activities.

Exploitation of these new technologies within the framework of sustainable development will require new kinds of cooperation between workers and employers, and between different firms or whole sectors of production. This highlights the increasing importance of partnerships within productive activity and the role that empowerment must play in promoting new economic relationships and productive employment.

Business leaders and initiators of private sector enterprise have a major role to play in identifying and promoting new employment and investment opportunities, and will be most successful in the long-run if they are able to apply the principles of sustainable development to their operating strategies. For the enterprise incorporating principles of sustainable development, economic development will be designed to meet the needs of both itself and its stakeholders, comprising shareholders, lenders, customers, employees, suppliers and communities affected (positively or negatively) by its business activities. It will give emphasis to the importance of human and natural resources in addition to physical and financial capital. Additionally, sustainable development is good business in itself, for suppliers of green consumerism, developers of environmentally and

socially responsible products and processes, for firms promoting their own efficiency and those engaged in social well-being.

Investment in physical capital investment and infrastructure-oriented employment schemes has often been relied upon to promote job creation. There is still an important role for such schemes in many areas of the developing world where infrastructural deficiencies pose serious bottlenecks to expanding levels of economic efficiency and production throughout the economy. For developed countries, however, these may be inappropriate as they may not lead toward long-term job creation and sustainable patterns of employment and production.

While physical capital investment is necessary for this, it is not in itself sufficient to insure productivity, growth and sustainable development. There must be a parallel process of human resource development, encompassing the training of the workforce and the establishment of a supportive institutional environment. The creation of absorptive capacity in the productive employment sector and possible contradictions with the economic adjustment regimes must be addressed. Consequently, a framework integrating social and economic policy is required. In support of the flexibility necessary to facilitate innovation and the growth of productive employment, workers must: have a sense of security in the workplace; share in the shaping of workplace operations; and have access to alternatives and opportunities, including necessary retraining, in the event of displacement. It is important to recognize, however, that current economic processes have disempowered many employees in their relations with their employers. Whereas earlier gains in worker interests and rights were achieved through the actions of trade unions and other representative bodies, international economic trends, including market globalization and rapidly changing labor-saving technologies, have eroded much of the power base workers previously held in workplace operations and heightened the sense of employment insecurity.

The phenomenal successes of the East Asian economies are often referred to by those seeking a new and better model of economic development. While it is important to recognize the many country-specific characteristics that would constrain widespread replication of such strategies, one valuable lesson of their experiences has been that a focus on capital or on production processes alone is not sufficient. It is also very important to maintain a focus on people, to invest in their education and technical skills in order that they become fully engaged in the creation and production of economic activity. Among the most important starting points of the East Asian successes were a high level

of investment in the health, education and skills training of their people and the promotion of a participatory process in the workplace. The apparent success of these economies is being advanced at great cost to the environment and human health and, therefore, have a high unsustainability potential.

This implies that allowing for the adaptation of design and production systems to meet changing environmental conditions will require greater levels of capital investment and the development of new technologies, or the capacity to exploit them. Technological innovation can encourage increases in the quality and productivity of capital, labor, energy and materials, which can, in turn, generate an atmosphere conducive to further investments of capital. To be consistent with sustainable development, the interaction between technological knowledge and other factors must promote increasing returns to scale and raise the level of output and growth, while improving the standards of living and enhancing ecosystem integrity.

Investment in human resource development makes good economic sense. Special emphasis is merited for increased investment in the social development of women, given the comprehensive and sustained exclusion they have suffered from equitable access to productive assets and employment opportunities. Investing in human resource development focused on women is especially important in the effort to reverse patterns of gender discrimination and the feminization of poverty and unemployment or underemployment. Such investment catalyzes resources throughout structures of family, work and society and, through a multiplier effect, has a wide-ranging impact in support of social development. But much more important is a shift in vision and commitment to one in which the ultimate goal of investment is geared to providing jobs for people and to meeting their needs for a wholesome life.

Recent development experience underscores the importance of sensitivity to the range of political, economic and cultural variables when shaping policies for social development, including employment, during periods of economic change. The leading priorities for policy attention in support of productive employment within the framework of sustainable development include the following:

- Employment opportunities and requisite training and inputs for women;
- Informal sector activities (both urban and rural);
- Rural employment, including especially non-farm rural production activities;

- Equity in opportunity for employment and in human resource development measures which allow for access to such opportunity;
- Labor-intensive strategies that generate employment and thereby contribute to poverty reduction and social cohesion;
- Measures addressing chronic unemployment and underemployment; and
- The environmental integrity of production activities.

In Appendix 2, we provide some broad categories in which productive employment consistent with sustainable development can be stimulated through appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral action.

Macro-economic Policies and Sustainable Social Development

Issues of domestic production, government finance and international trade are all integral to discussion of sustainable social development in relation to their impact on social and economic processes at national and international levels. Increasing globalization implies closer integration of national and international economic structures, making the design and implementation of macroeconomic policy fundamental. Coping with global recession and national economic crises has come to characterize the experience of developing and developed countries alike. Processes of economic policy reform, while necessary, may lead to further stresses in the short-term and require careful analysis and monitoring if they are not to undermine the broader objectives of development.

If a government's budget is thought of as its financial "plan of action", then it becomes relevant to examine it for its ability to support the principles of sustainable development. Given that all country budgets are the historical product of earlier ways of thinking which have overlooked (if not been inimical to) such principles, reform of the budget process and of governmental economic policy making is critical. Most of the limited reforms adopted with specific reference to sustainable development have been narrow in their impact, largely as incremental add-ons with little impact on the main body of spending and taxation. Only when there is a reversal of the current system of incentives supporting unsustainable activities will there be a profound and lasting impact on sustainable social development.

The “greening” of the tax system represents one way in which such a new system of incentives might be encouraged. In this way, detrimental activities that degrade the environment and create conditions for social disintegration such as overconsumption of fossil fuels, release of CFCs, excessive applications of pesticides and other chemicals, could be discouraged. At the same time, such taxes might raise revenues for global initiatives promoting the transfer of funds from rich to poor countries as repayment of the global ecological debt incurred by developed countries to date.

International trade is also a powerful force for sustainable development, having the potential for real endogenous economic development, driving the development of Third World countries more effectively than traditional flows of official development assistance. Trade could also be a force for environmental improvement. With increasing income from a growing trade sector, developing countries might be better equipped to undertake long-range planning respectful of the integrity of natural resource stocks. It is critical, however, that trade must fully incorporate the objectives of sustainable development if it is to avoid the mere transfer of environmental costs from one nation and generation to another. In this regard, trade policy must address issues of equity and community integrity, reflected in its attention to poverty, structural adjustment, regional unemployment and government policy for social development.

After more than a decade of orthodox structural adjustment program initiatives supported by the World Bank, there have been markedly few improvements (and indeed some cases of decline) in the economic performance of many low-income developing countries, leading to growing concern for the social, political and environmental impacts of adjustment lending. To the extent that adjustment measures act to reduce access by the poor to options and resources in the short-run, it will lead to temporary (or protracted) impoverishment and the potential for increased stress on the finite reserves of the natural capital stock as the poor adopt coping strategies to maintain their livelihoods under adverse economic conditions. This will exacerbate destructive patterns of resource exploitation, intensify the vulnerability of the poor to future crisis and preclude progress toward sustainable social development.

To date, adjustment policies have failed to have as central goals the reduction of poverty, direct support for environmentally positive policy, or support of sustainable development. Observation reveals that adjustment has contributed to both positive and negative consequences, although often through default rather than design. In

cases of observed negative impacts, it becomes relevant to ask what might have been done differently to mitigate or avoid such consequences (e.g., the nature of crops promoted through pricing reforms, alternate credit provisions for small-scale producers, attention to governmental monitoring and regulatory capacity). This will require renewed effort to integrate political considerations, technical change, macroeconomic policies, and effects on production in the principal economic sectors of countries undertaking adjustment, with sustainable social development as a goal.

Identifying the range of policy objectives and strategies pursued at the national level toward structural adjustment will help to assess policy options and anticipated outcomes available to national governments. Priority interests and reasons for engagement in the policy process will vary as a function of the income level of a given country. Primary attention should be given to the group of low-income countries (or countries experiencing deteriorating economic conditions) since they are more likely to be undertaking adjustment-oriented reform. Efforts to identify policy objectives, relevant supporting interest groups, and actors or organizations opposed to those objectives yield the recognition of potential proponents and opponents of different aspects of a policy package. For instance, short-term economic growth at any cost might be an objective supported by government, the private sector and multilateral institutions, but opposed by the poor and NGOs; the objective of poverty alleviation might be broadly supported by all without much overt opposition, while objectives to assure an equitable distribution of wealth and productive assets might meet strong opposition from the private sector and certain political groups representing elite interests despite the support of government and multilateral institutions, NGOs and the poor. This policy/actor approach would allow the design of a preliminary compromise initiative supporting the "buy-in" of diverse interest groups, enhancing social cohesion and setting the stage for the design of a policy package consistent with sustainable development.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST IN SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Macro-Social Policy Changes

In reviewing issues of poverty, unemployment and social integration in the context of sustainable development, it is crucial to consider what kinds of macro policy changes might be required at the global or international level in order to facilitate policy change at the national level in support of sustainable social development. International factors influence domestic policy choices through the structure and operation of international markets, the nature and activity of social and political linkages, and the distribution of power that determines the role of national actors on the global stage. Key change agents at the international level include transnational corporations, multilateral institutions, private financial institutions, some members of the NGO community, and national governments (some clearly more powerful than others). Obstacles to policy change derive from large vested interests among certain private sectors and transnational corporations, the imbalance of power allowing some governments greater weight in decision making, and limits to international financial capital (whether arising from economic or political constraints).

Faced with severe economic constraints, countries with deteriorating economic conditions might have the following options:

- First, within the current economic adjustment framework, they might accept the package of adjustment policies as prescribed by the World Bank and the IMF, with mutually agreed interventions to influence the existing model toward inclusion of measures addressing poverty eradication and sustainable development.
- A second option would initiate a unique approach to economic crisis and adjustment using an endogenous, multi-stakeholder process incorporating an alternative strategy for negotiation involving all relevant parties on the basis of local interests, institutional capacities, resources and goals. By breaking away from the basis of standard World Bank and IMF packages, such discussion of all policy options free of initial presumptions would yield a participatory and inclusive approach to decision making, giving concrete expression to the objectives of social integration and cohesion. While this might better accommodate political pressures associated with policy change and generate a truly endogenous adjustment

process, it may also be cumbersome and slow in dealing with the crises associated with rapid economic transformation.

- A third option could begin with generic elements of the current adjustment package, submitting them to a review process to tailor them to the specific policy needs of a particular country. While assuming that the basis of the standard structural adjustment model is sound, this approach would however seek to include local realities and mitigate impacts on the environment, vulnerable groups, cultural and social structures, to endogenize the structural adjustment program in ways that integrate sustainable development principles.

Concern arises over the stark possibility that countries might currently be loaded with separate and unintegrated plans covering macroeconomic adjustment (related to the World Bank and IMF), environmental action plans (World Bank), strategies for sustainable development (IUCN) and action plans for social development (World Summit for Social Development). If such lack of policy integration exists, then it would be fruitful to identify areas of common ground and strive toward some kind of integrated strategy that incorporates current elements of national development plans, environmental impact assessments, macroeconomic adjustment strategies and social development action plans in new ways towards a co-implementation of policy supporting the comprehensive objective of sustainable development.

A strategy to be used in developing a framework for assessing the sustainable development outcome of a policy package could begin with the environmental impact assessment as a fundamental tool, used routinely to determine project impacts on the environment in parallel with economic impact assessments. If these assessments included social, cultural, political and equity impacts (the other pillars of sustainable development), they might then qualify largely as an assessment of the sustainable development potential of the project. The next step would seek to move from the assessment of projects to the assessment of policy. This would seek to correct the problem by which unintegrated environmental impact assessments fail to link their separate findings and inaccurately reflect the comprehensive and cumulative environmental consequences, as well as integrate social and economic concerns. If integrated assessments can be generated at the project level, then an effort to amalgamate them at the program level (as a series of projects) and then to the policy level (reflecting a series of programs) will lead to the realization of a strategy to assess policy in terms of sustainable development.

The strategy should include an integrative framework/feedback loop that allows the integration of sustainable development principles, which are revealed as absent by the previous steps. These might include poverty impacts, equity issues (both intergenerational and intragenerational), and the environmental, economic, social, cultural and political issues underlying the principles of sustainable development, and would reflect national and local realities, desires and goals. Such a strategy could result in a sustainable development adjustment program (SDAP) designed to move a country and consequently the planet (i.e., its people, economy, society and ecology) to a path of sustainable development, while effectively promoting the eradication of poverty, the generation of productive employment and greater social integration.

Empowerment For Sustainable Social Development

The key to social development lies in the global, national and local investment in human resource development which furnishes societies with the capacity to adapt and transform national and international institutions in tandem with changing global circumstances. In this sense, social development is contingent upon the empowerment of civil society (i.e., social groups) and of governments and international institutions. Power and access to instruments of decision making are important elements in the relationship between poverty and development. As a process, empowerment refers to building the capacity of local, national and international communities to respond to a changing environment. This requires internal and external change that is appropriate and innovative, building critical consciousness about inequality, social support to overcome self-blame, and the perceived power to achieve change. It is commonly assumed that power is a zero sum game in which the powerless can only be empowered if the powerful relinquish some of their power, which they will never do. Such a view, however true in the past, is no longer ethically tenable nor consistent with the growing support for a sustainable world paradigm. Current power holders must be bold enough to make the transition to less hierarchical structures in their own longer-term interests and for the greater common good.

Empowerment assumes: good governance, legitimacy of decision making bodies, and the creativity of citizens; self-reliant economies that are endogenously defined and human-centered; process-oriented community development; and popular participation in decision-making and collective action. Necessary conditions for empowerment include:

- Direct participation in community decision making and representative government, particularly by women and youth;
- Provision of space for cultural assertion, spiritual welfare, experiential social learning, and the articulation and application of indigenous knowledge;
- Access to entitlements to land and other natural resources, change-oriented education, housing and health facilities;
- Access to opportunities for generating income, assets and credit; and
- Access to knowledge and skills (both endogenous and external), which encourage the capacity to adapt to change.

Empowerment is crucial to the reversal of social disintegration, poverty and unemployment since it promotes the capacity of people, communities and societies to cope with the changing environment in the transition towards a new world order guided by sustainable development principles of inclusiveness, transparency, accountability, maintenance of ecological and cultural integrity, equity and social justice. To foster social awareness, higher levels of participation and new insights on ecological processes of change and self-renewal at the local level, empowerment strategies have advanced methods of appraisal, planning, implementation, and review directed at improving the livelihoods of the poor. These have stressed the importance of fact-finding, education and evaluation, with the poor themselves engaged in the processes of development planning and action.

Satisfaction of basic human needs and aspirations depends upon an egalitarian social order founded on the equitable distribution of wealth and power, best realized under conditions of peace and participatory decision making. Related processes of social self-determination are necessary for achieving cultural integrity and building the capacity of individuals and communities to be self-reliant and solve problems while maintaining the integrity of ecosystems.

Strategies for redressing poverty, unemployment and social disintegration must incorporate empowerment concepts in their bid to promote sustainable social development. Education and skills training are fundamental tools in this process for their contribution to the capacity of individuals and communities to innovate and respond to change in their environments. While increased expenditure on education is critical, the nature of the education system provided by such investment is also key - that which responds to people's needs

rather than one adopting a massive top-down approach will be the more successful. Education in its wider meaning contributes towards the broadening of people's social perceptions, allowing them to locate themselves in the larger social, political and cultural context, thus limiting the tendency towards ethnic polarization. In this way, education must be seen as one manifestation of the new partnerships demanded by the transition toward sustainable development.

Education and training are closely tied to employment expansion and the capacity of individuals to take advantage of new employment opportunities. In turn, labor markets and policy addressing employment at local and national levels need to incorporate the principles of sustainable development if they are to contribute positively to the progress of social development.

Within this framework, issues of employment and of poverty eradication which constitute important aspects of social change can be articulated by various actors including: the poor themselves (most notably women, children and youth); non-governmental organizations, which enable empowerment at the local level and are themselves empowered as they intervene on behalf of the poor; business enterprises and transnational corporations; and internationally recognized institutions of governance, trade and finance, including national governments, multilateral organizations, and the international lending and trade bodies. To the extent that empowerment for sustainable social development has to date been limited by inequitable resource distribution and communities' limited access to their own internal resources, there is a need to make a quantum leap towards greater emphasis on the dynamics between national and international spheres, incorporating larger institutional and structural factors that inhibit local change. There is need for reform within national and international institutions towards decentralization and distribution of economic power, support for cultural diversity, and greater transparency and accountability in the development and implementation of policies directed at sustainable social development.

The challenge lies squarely with the powerful and the wealthy to abandon some old approaches and comforts and to seek a more enduring social order through sharing power towards the greater security and comfort of all humanity in harmony with nature. Failing this, increasing natural and social tensions could result in undesirable change for all.

APPENDIX 1

List of participants at the IISD international workshop on "Sustainable Development, Poverty Eradication and Macro/Micro Policy Adjustments", Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, 2-4 December 1993:

Stephan Barg, IISD, Canada

Fikret Berkes, University of Manitoba, Canada

Al Berry, University of Toronto, Canada

Ralph Chipman, UN Secretariat of the World Summit for Social Development, U.S.A.

Aaron Cosbey, IISD, Canada

Dharam Ghai, UN Research Institute for Social Development, Switzerland

Peter Hardi, IISD, Canada

David Korten, People-Centered Development Forum, U.S.A.

Kari Levitt, McGill University, Canada

John Loxley, University of Manitoba, Canada

Gary McMahon, International Development Research Center, Canada

Guy Mhone, Southern Africa Regional Institute for Policy Studies, Zimbabwe

Morris Miller, University of Ottawa, Canada

Syed Sajjadur Rahman, Canadian International Development Agency, Canada

William Rees, University of British Columbia, Canada

Fernando Reyes, Permanent Mission of Chile to the UN, U.S.A.

Nevin Shaw, IISD, Canada

Naresh Singh, IISD, Canada

Rehman Sobhan, Bangladesh Centre for Policy Dialogue, Bangladesh

Richard Strickland, IISD, Canada

Vangile Titi, IISD, Canada

Ben Turok, Institute for African Alternatives, South Africa

Ponna Wignaraja, UN University, Sri Lanka

Joyce Yu, UN Development Programme, U.S.A.

Arshad Zaman, A. Zaman & Associates, Pakistan

APPENDIX 2

Categories of livelihoods for sustainable development:

Resource renewal

Forest management

- Forest surveys and replanting
- Labour intensive harvesting
- Intensified woodlot management
- Forest protection

Wildlife management

- Inventories, surveys and monitoring
- Habitat improvement, restoration and protection
- Renewed hunting and trapping

Agriculture

- Multiple use and niche-specific product development
- Expanded value-added marketing
- Increased local processing
- Integrated pest management

Land and water conservation and restoration

- Soil and ground cover restoration
- Wetland restoration and protection
- Stream and riverbank protection
- Mitigation of environmental impacts arising from rural and urban activities

Fisheries and aquatic habitat protection

- Community-based management and co-management
- Water quality/sewage initiatives (large and small communities)
- Renewal and maintenance of depleted resources
- Aquaculture and mariculture

Water resources

- Hydroelectric power
- Drinking water provision
- Recreational uses

Parks and natural areas protection and services

- Marine parks and reserves with services such as whale watching or sea bird trips

- Northern parks development

- Southern parks and reserves infrastructure development and expanded services

Tourism, including ecotourism

- Coastal tourism, sea kayaking, whale watching, sports fishing

- Forest tourism in old-growth regions

- Agricultural region tourism (including bed and breakfast operations)

- “Adventure” and “cultural” tourism in unique locations including areas managed by aboriginal peoples and other ethnic communities

- Infrastructure development of national trail system, relying on abandoned railway beds

- Development of other domestic and international tourism “magnets”

- Conventional tourism occupations

Environmental information services

- Environmental monitoring and surveys

- Geographic information systems development and interpretation

- Community-based monitoring of environmental and resource situations

Environmental impact mitigation

- Site mitigation of infrastructure and other projects

- Toxic site restoration

- Emergency measures training

Waste management

- Environmental control technology development, manufacturing, sale and use

- Operation of waste disposal sites

- Pollution prevention - industrial, commercial, and municipal

Recycling and reuse

Secondary use industries for building supplies, clothing, appliances, and equipment

Heritage restorations

Recycling operations - new collection, sorting, and processing systems

Market development for products made from recycled materials

Energy efficiency

Home and building audits

New appliances, vehicles, insulation technologies

Improved transportation options

Materials

Expanded production of reusable and recyclable packaging

Development of lightweight, strong, high-value composites for engines, structural use

Renewable energy

Assessment of wind, solar and biomass potential

Efficient conversion technologies

Urban restoration and improvement

Core area improvements

Infrastructure renewal and improvement

Waterfront development

Improvement of environmental conditions

Urban forest development and maintenance

Environment and resource education

Community-based education

Extension services in relation to resource uses

Aboriginal land claim and resource management

School, university and technical trainers

Law and administrative services

Technical services (domestic and international)

- Environmental assessment
- Environmental audit
- Environmental management services
- Environmental information systems
- Environmental research

Environmental health and safety

- Ecotoxicology
- Environmental sensitivity research
- Prevention training

Mining

- Recultivation of old mine sites
- Genetic seed banks
- Improved processing and treatment of uranium mill tailings
- Development of soil remediation technologies
- Isolated waste management options

Financial services


- Accounting
- Banking
- Investment services
- Insurance

Community infrastructure

- Child care
- Senior activities
- Bike/foot access to jobs, homes, recreational facilities
- Municipal public works

Education

- Computer training
- Remedial and skills training



The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is a private non-profit corporation established and supported by the governments of Canada and Manitoba.

Its mandate is to promote sustainable development in decision making - within government, business and the daily lives of individuals within Canada and internationally.

IISD believes sustainable development will require new knowledge and new ways of sharing knowledge. IISD engages in policy research and communications to meet those challenges, focussing on initiatives for international trade, business strategy, and national budgets. The issue of poverty eradication is a fundamental theme linking IISD's research and communications.

The interconnectedness of the world's environment, economy and social fabric implies that collaborative efforts are needed to bring about changes. IISD works through and encourages the formation of partnerships to achieve creative new approaches to the complex problems we face.