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The *Brundtland* Report as a precursor to the concept of Sustainable Development

I. Introduction

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) published the report "Our Common Future", also known as the Brundtland Report because the chairperson of the WCED, who was responsible for its drafting, was the Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland.

The preparation of this report had been mandated by the General Assembly, according to Resolution 38/161 on the Process for the Elaboration of the Environmental Outlook to the Year 2000 and beyond, of 19 December 1983, which called upon WCED to have, inter alia, the following objectives:

1. Propose long-term environmental strategies to achieve sustainable development for the year 2000 and beyond;
2. Recommend ways in which concern for the environment could be translated into greater

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cooperation among developing countries and among countries at different levels of economic and social development and lead to the establishment of common objectives;

3. Examine ways and means by which the international community can deal more effectively with environmental problems; and
4. To help define shared perceptions on long-term environmental issues and relevant efforts needed to successfully solve problems related to the protection and improvement of the environment, as well as to help develop a long-term programme of action for the coming decades and set aspirational goals for the global community.

II. The concept of sustainable development

Against this background, what is meant by sustainable development? According to the *Brundtland Report*, "sustainable or durable development" is understood as development that "meets the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The WCED also considered it appropriate to broaden the definition of the concept according to the level of development of the state. In this sense, it was possible that the same conceptual identity might not exist in "developed" countries as in "developing" countries.



Thus, food, clothing, shelter and work would belong to the group of essential needs, and sustainable development would therefore aim at their full satisfaction in order to ensure their availability for future generations. To give an example, it is possible that the concept of need is not the same for the inhabitants of Nicaragua as it is for the inhabitants of Germany.

III. Additional issues raised in the Brundtland Report

Among other issues covered in the report are:

- The unsustainability of production and consumption patterns;
- The world's population density is growing at an unprecedented rate, making it increasingly difficult to meet the needs of the world's population, i.e., the cause-effect relationship is direct: the more the world's population grows, the greater the demand for food and the greater the consumption of resources to meet its needs.
- The promotion of the principle of international cooperation and;
- The promotion of the principle of social and corporate responsibility.



IV. Final considerations

The Brundtland report was responsible for delineating the definitions of "environment" and "development", conceiving them unequivocally as inherent rights and stressing the need to adopt social and sustainable means of economic growth, through the creation of policies aimed at developing action plans that would promote the changes necessary for the conservation of ecosystems.



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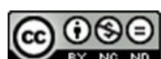
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Cofinanciado por
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Project No. 101085459



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