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# Sustainability and Policy: Past, Present, and Outlook

# Sustainability and Policy

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Policy =

- 📄 1.a., Prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs;
- 📄 1.b., management or procedure based primarily on material interest.

# Sustainability and Policy

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- 📄 2.a., a definite course or method of action selected from alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions;
- 📄 2.b., a high-level overall plan embracing the overall goals and acceptable procedures, esp. of a governmental body.

# Sustainability and Policy

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Environmental Policies that are:

prudent and wise,

based primarily on material interest,

selected from alternative strategies in light of  
the future,


and presented in a plan that takes into account  
overall goals.

The background of the slide is a spiral-bound notebook with a light beige, textured cover. The spiral binding is visible on the left side. The text is centered on the page.

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**What is it?**

**Is it possible?**

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“Sustainable Development is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

World Commission on Environment and  
Development (WCED) - 1987

# WCED Definition contains two key concepts:

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- ☞ The concept of “needs,” in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which priority should be given; and
- ☞ The idea of limitations - imposed by the state of technology and social organization - on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs. Thus . . .

. . .the goal of economic and social development must be defined in terms of sustainability in all countries and implies a concern for social equity between and within each generation.



# Sustainable Development as Commonly Understood:

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- ☞ Concept is anthropocentric - focused on the human species. Ethical question of value of other species is ignored.
- ☞ Concept is ambiguous and impossible to operationalize.

# Sustainable Development as Commonly Understood :

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- ☰ Concept of a sustainable subsystem in an unsustainable global system is fundamentally oxymoronic
- ☰ Concepts like “sustainable community,” “sustainable firm,” “sustainable product” must be seen as generic indications of goodwill toward environmental issues, not an achieved end state.

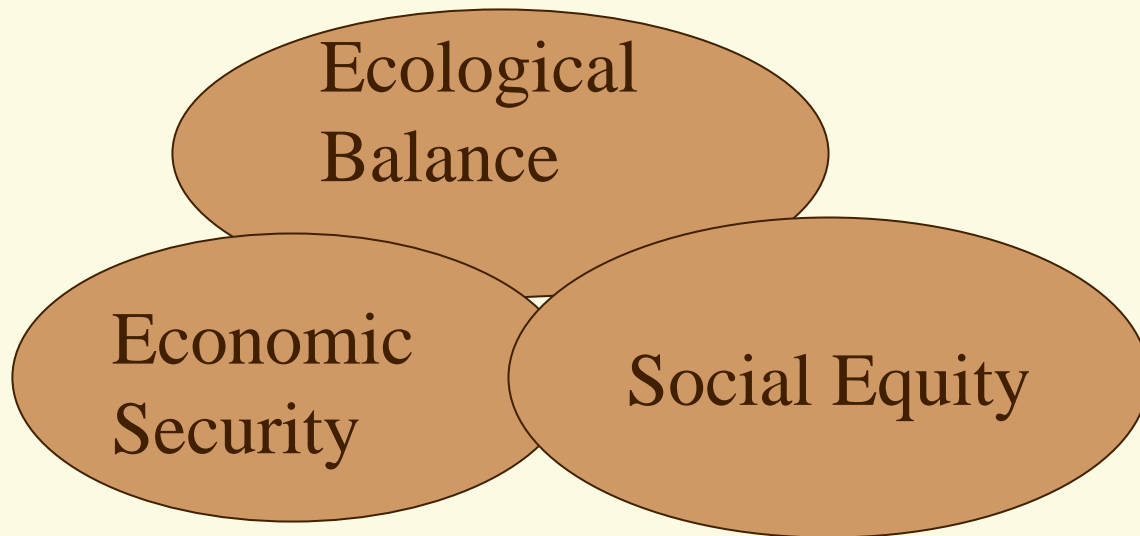
# Sustainable Development as Commonly Understood

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- ☰ Sustainability must be a characteristic of the global system as a whole, including human activity in its totality and the underlying biological, chemical and physical systems.
- ☰ Sustainability requires: ecological balance, economic security, and social equity across generations.

# Components of Sustainability

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# Sustainable Development is ...

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... that level of human activity  
that can be continued indefinitely without  
diminishing the capacity of the biosphere  
to support life or assimilate waste.