

objective of stabilizing atmospheric GHG concentrations at a level that would avoid "dangerous" human interference with the climate system. The definition of "dangerous," however, is left open to broad interpretation by Parties. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol has expanded the decision-making process for climate change policy, but currently includes only short-term targets for some industrialized countries.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS FOUNDING SYSTEM

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The longstanding and widening debate on the environment, based on expanding scientific knowledge, has established that the earth is a bounded system, with a limited capacity to regenerate resources and absorb waste. Sound development of both social and ecological systems is only possible within the constraints imposed by the natural environment, and the challenge facing our societies today is how to preserve the delicate balance of the biosphere. The international community has recognized that increasing environmental degradation is related to the present development of human society. This is characterized by production and consumption models based on high utilization of natural resources and energy, the latter being mostly derived from fossil sources.

The concept of sustainable development, first conceived at international level in the nineteen eighties, emphasizes the need for solutions that can harmonize the expectations of economic systems with the conservation of ecosystems. The sustainability approach introduces the principle of environmental responsibility for the future survival of our planet and the principle of intra- and inter-generation equity. Implicit here is the need to improve the quality of life of the poorest populations on earth and that of future generations. The principles of responsibility and equity, underlying the sustainable development concept, show the importance of finding shared political solutions to international disputes, without having recourse to war, which always has disastrous consequences for the lives of millions of people and destroys the

conditions which the sustenance, and the material and spiritual growth of people depend on. Conflict is always in opposition to development.

The scope of sustainable development is the world as a whole, and it requires a multidimensional and intersectorial approach. Environmental policies must be integrated with those of the economic, social and cultural sectors, requiring a number of institutional and ethical changes at both local and international levels. Actions taken to achieve the sustainability objective need to respect democratic principles, different cultures and traditions, fundamental human rights, and civil and political freedom, through a wide consensus founded on the participation of all.

The sustainable program is being conducted at four levels: educational, consultative, research, and implementative. Indicators of sustainability are selected pieces of information that reflect the status of larger systems. They allow us to better understand the "big picture" by looking at various smaller, but important, pictures. Indicators help to show the direction a system is moving; if it is improving, deteriorating or staying the same. Usually at the sustainable indicator selection process for any territory three basic types of indicators is developed:

1. Indicators indicating whether the environmental objectives and goal set by the government are being met
2. Indicators of environmentally friendly country management
3. Indicators selected by the public which will reflect the state of the environment

The process of choosing sustainability indicators will improve the city and country managers' ability to make a decision at various levels and promote local information exchange, participation and democracy. The process of indicator selection by the public should also contribute to making the pilot territories more visible and help them be a role model in building awareness of and momentum for sustainable development in the whole world.