

Key Idea 1: Sustainable development is an important concept

The question of deciding whether something is 'sustainable' or not crops up a lot in geography. Often the question occurs when a new project is being developed, such as The Three Gorges Dam from Unit 2 (Chapter 12).

Sustainable development was defined in the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report 'Our Common Future' (1987). The definition below is often called the 'Brundtland' definition, after the chairperson of the WCED, Gro Harlem Brundtland:

'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

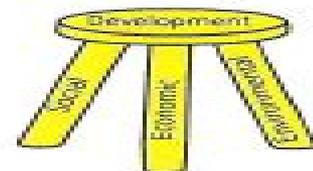
This definition suggests that **human development** is sustainable when:

- it meets the needs of people today, i.e. incomes and quality of life improve
- development today does not reduce quality of life for people in the future.

One way of deciding whether development is sustainable is to use the stool of sustainability model (Figure 1).

This uses three criteria (social, economic and environmental) to judge whether development is sustainable. If one of the legs is judged to be unsustainable then the stool will 'fall over'.

Figure 1 The stool of sustainability



Key features	Sustainable development	Unsustainable development
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly improves life, such as better education, health and housing • Promotes equality between different groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes some people, such as women or an ethnic minority group, increasing inequality • Imposed on people from above, so they have no say in decision-making
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases income for many people long term, so quality of life improves • Proves to be good value for money, benefiting the most people for the least cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads to debt, which future generations will have to pay back • Only makes a small number of people wealthy and increases inequality
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps conserve biodiversity, e.g. selective logging rather than large-scale deforestation • Uses non-polluting and renewable resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wastes finite natural resources, e.g. fossil fuels, which are then not available in the future • Causes pollution, e.g. industry polluting the air and water, that future generations will have to clean up

Check your understanding

Tested

What is the definition of sustainable development?

Knowing the basics

Sustainable development is important because what humans do today should not make life harder for future generations.

Questions to think about:

- 1 Re-examine the Three Gorges Dam project on page 94. Do you think this project was economically, socially and environmentally sustainable?
- 2 Are bottom-up development projects (page 93) more sustainable than top-down ones?
- 3 Is there such a thing as a sustainable level of population? (See Unit 2, Chapter 9.)

Stretch and challenge

In reality, no development is 100 per cent sustainable. There will always be some negative impacts on the environment and/or some people. The trick is to try and minimise these negative impacts as far as possible.

Making Geographical Decisions Uganda

Dirk-Jan Koch



Making Geographical Decisions Uganda:

Geospatial Technologies and Advancing Geographic Decision Making: Issues and Trends Albert, Donald P., 2012-03-31 The availability of geographically referenced data the proliferation of geospatial technologies and advances in spatial analytics have been a boom to applied geographers Geospatial Technologies and Advancing Geographic Decision Making Issues and Trends is a resource for private and public sector applied geographers engaged as geospatial technicians analysts scientists and managers It includes chapters that highlight the use of geospatial technologies to explore applied geographic issues and problems studies from economic geography urban geography population geography medical geography political geography geography of education geography of crime and transportation geography are considered

Down to Earth National Research Council, Division on Earth and Life Studies, Board on Earth Sciences and Resources, Mapping Science Committee, Committee on Geography, Committee on the Geographic Foundation for Agenda 21, 2002-10-24 In 1992 world leaders adopted Agenda 21 the work program of the 1992 U N Conference on Environment and Development This landmark event provided a political foundation and action items to facilitate the global transition toward sustainable development The international community marked the tenth anniversary of this conference in Johannesburg South Africa in August 2002 Down to Earth a component of the U S State Department s Geographic Information for Sustainable Development project for the World Summit focuses on sub Saharan Africa with examples drawn from case study regions where the U S Agency for International Development and other agencies have broad experience Although African countries are the geographic focus of the study the report has broader applicability Down to Earth summarizes the importance and applicability of geographic data for sustainable development and draws on experiences in African countries to examine how future sources and applications of geographic data could provide reliable support to decision makers as they work towards sustainable development The committee emphasizes the potential of new technologies such as satellite remote sensing systems and geographic information systems that have revolutionized data collection and analysis over the last decade

Aid from International Ngos Dirk-Jan Koch, 2009 International NGOs are increasingly important players within the new aid architecture but their geographic choices remain uncharted territory This book focuses on patterns of development assistance mapping while analysing and assessing the country choices of the largest international NGOs Koch s approach is interdisciplinary and uses qualitative quantitative and experimental methods to provide a clear insight in the determinants of country choices of international NGOs The book aims to discover the country choices of international NGOs how they are determined and how they could be improved This work which uses a dataset created specifically for the research comes to the conclusion that international NGOs do not target the poorest and most difficult countries They are shown to be focussing mostly on those countries where their back donors are active Additionally it was discovered that they tend to cluster their activities for example international NGOs also have their donor darlings and their donor orphans Their

clustering is explained by adapting theories that explain concentration in for profit actors to the non profit context The book is the first on the geographic choices of international NGOs and is therefore of considerable academic interest especially for those focusing on development aid and third sector research Furthermore the book provides specific policy suggestions for more thought out geographic decisions of international NGOs and their back donors *Geographical Abstracts* ,1984

Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York American Geographical Society of New York,1902

Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography Royal Geographical Society (Great Britain),1892 Standardizing Land Cover Mapping for Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Decision Making Giuliano Cecchi,2008 Land cover maps are useful tools for supporting several stages of tsetse and trypanosomiasis TT intervention mapping vector habitats planning baseline entomological surveys monitoring the environmental impact of intervention strategies at landscape level and planning land use of reclaimed areas In this paper the Land Cover Classification System LCCS developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Environment Programme is proposed as a tool for harmonizing land cover mapping activities carried out in the context of TT research and control *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* American Geographical Society of New York,1902

The National Geographic Magazine ,1925 **Conceptual Framework and Guidelines for Establishing Geographic Information Systems Capable of Integrating Natural Resources Data and Socio-economic Data for Development-oriented Planning, Monitoring, and Research (preliminary Version)** Unesco. General Information Programme,UNISIST (Program),1984 *Imperial Military Geography* J. Fitzgerald Lee,1922 **Systematic Political**

Geography Harm J. De Blij,1973 La primera parte de la obra incluye una introduccion a la geografia politica seguida de un estudio de la emergencia y estructura del estado y de sus elementos Mas adelante alude a varios aspectos territoriales como la capital fronteras y limites y mas terrial Por ultimo se ocupa de los modernos fenomenos del colonialismo y el supranacionalismo

The Geographical Impact of Migration Paul E. White,Robert Woods,1980 *Geographical Teacher* ,1967 Includes section Reviews and other bibliographical material *The Indian Decisions (new Series)*. ,1915

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