

Sustainable America

A New Consensus for the Prosperity, Opportunity and a Healthy Environment for the Future

Table of Contents

- [Preface](#)

The Council believed that it was important to look to the future and articulate a vision of what is desirable and possible. It sought to develop a set of common goals and beliefs as the foundation for its policy recommendations. This was critical to achieving consensus about policies that would help realize its goals.
- [Definition and Vision Statement](#)

The Council adopted the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development. The vision statement articulates the Council's broad concept of the benefits of sustainability for the nation.
- [We Believe Statement](#)

This is a set of fundamental beliefs that Council members share and that provide the foundation for its recommendations.
- [Introduction](#)

President Clinton asked the Council to recommend a national action strategy for sustainable development at a time when Americans are confronted with new challenges that have global ramifications. The Council concluded that in order to meet the needs of the present while ensuring that future generations have the same opportunities, the United States must change by moving from conflict to collaboration and adopting stewardship and individual responsibility as tenets by which to live.
- [Chapter 1: National Goals Toward Sustainable Development](#)

This common set of goals emerged from the Council's vision. These goals express in concrete terms the elements of sustainability. Alongside the goals are suggested indicators that can be used to help measure progress toward achieving them.
- [Chapter 2: Building A New Framework for A New Century](#)

Future progress requires that the United States broaden its commitment to environmental protection to embrace the essential components of sustainable development: environmental health, economic prosperity, and social equity and well-being. This means reforming the current system of environmental management and building a new and efficient framework based on performance, flexibility linked to accountability, extended product responsibility, tax and subsidy reform, and market incentives.
- [Chapter 3: Information and Education](#)

Information and education, in both formal and nonformal spheres, have a tremendous

potential for increasing citizen awareness and ability to engage in decisions affecting their lives. Key to this strategy is managing information better, expanding access to the decision process, measuring progress toward societal goals more comprehensively, and incorporating accounting measures that educate and enable decisionmakers and individuals to make decisions that are more economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable. Additionally, the country's formal education system must be reformed to better address sustainability, and nonformal education forums and mechanisms tapped to promote opportunities for learning about sustainability.

- [Chapter 4: Strengthening Communities](#)
Creating a better future depends, in part, on the knowledge and involvement of citizens and on a decision-making process that embraces and encourages differing perspectives of those affected by governmental policy. Steps toward a more sustainable future include developing community-driven strategic planning and collaborative regional planning; improving community and building design; decreasing sprawl; and creating strong, diversified local economies while increasing jobs and other economic opportunities.
- [Chapter 5: Natural Resources Stewardship](#)
Stewardship is an essential concept that helps to define appropriate human interaction with the natural world. An ethic of stewardship builds on collaborative approaches; ecosystem integrity; and incentives in such areas as agricultural resources management, sustainable forestry, fisheries, restoration, and biodiversity conservation.
- [Chapter 6: U.S. Population and Sustainability](#)
Population growth, especially when coupled with current consumption patterns, affects sustainability. A sustainable United States is one where all Americans have access to family planning and reproductive health services, women enjoy increased opportunities for education and employment, and responsible immigration policies are fairly implemented and enforced.
- [Chapter 7: International Leadership](#)
The United States has both reason and responsibility to develop and carry out global policies that support sustainable development. Because of its history and power, the United States is inevitably a leader and needs to be an active participant in cooperative international efforts to encourage democracy, support scientific research, and enhance economic development that preserves the environment and protects human health.
- [Appendices](#)