

Princeton University
Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
Spring 2003

WWS-402f: Policy Task Force

Sustainable Development – Can We Do It?

Room 014 Robertson Hall
Tuesdays 7:30-10:00 PM

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Overview:

Sustainable development has been placed on the international agenda through a series of international conferences organized by the United Nations. The first of these meetings was the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972 which was a critical catalyst in putting environmental issues on both national and international agendas. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) otherwise known as the 'Earth Summit', held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992 resulted in a set of agreements on environmental issues ranging from climate change, biodiversity and forest preservation, to Agenda 21 which is a global plan of action for achieving sustainable development. In 2002 the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. Prior to the WSSD conference there was widespread agreement that progress in implementing sustainable development had been minimal since the 1992 Earth Summit, with poverty deepening and environmental degradation worsening. It was agreed that what was needed was a plan of action with widespread participation.

The 2002 Johannesburg Summit laid the groundwork for action. The targets, timetables and commitments agreed upon at Johannesburg are broad and sweeping. Examples of these targets include: to halve by 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than \$1 a day; to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation; to use and produce chemicals by 2020 in ways that do not lead to significant adverse effects on human health and the environment; to maintain or restore depleted fish stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield by 2015; and to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biological diversity. Commitments were not only by governments, but also by NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and businesses, who launched over 300 voluntary initiatives.

How well explicit commitments are upheld and whether sufficient funding and projects are launched internationally will determine whether WSSD is deemed a success or failure in the future. Johannesburg did, however, provide a shift from traditional diplomatic agreements between governments, to more project-oriented partnerships that may include non-governmental organizations and the private sector as well as interested governments.

Will Johannesburg make a genuine difference? The purpose of this task force is to explore effective means of achieving sustainable development. We will start by using the commitments of WSSD and try to determine what specific technical options and implementation strategies would be most effective in achieving the Summit's sustainability objectives.

Structure and Calendar

The goal of the task force is for each student to write a research paper that will contribute to the group report. Sessions in the early part of the semester will consist of lectures and relatively extensive reading. Later sessions will focus more on individual research topics, establishment of the objectives of the group report, and finally on the presentation of the group report at the U.S. Department of State in Washington D.C. Although recommendations for projects do not need to have the State Department as the implementing entity, inclusion of how the United States government could contribute to the success of recommended projects would be advantageous. Readings for the task force are either contained in your course packet, are on reserve in the Woodrow Wilson School library, are available on world wide web sites described below and identified during the semester or will be distributed in class.

The calendar for the task force described below is subject to modification as the semester progresses. Our initial plan is that each student will spend the first eight weeks of the semester on a research paper that will form the basis of the group report. Paper outlines will be due on Friday March 7 (at the end of week 5), for discussion with the director and advice from the graduate consultant during week 6 (mid-term week). Week 7 will be used to discuss how to integrate the individual research topics into a group research project and report. Week 8 will be used for consultation with the director (no group meeting is scheduled). Semi-final individual papers will be due on Friday April 4

(at the end of week 8 – the second week following spring break). Week 9 and 10 (April 8 and 15) is for oral presentations of individual reports, and for discussion of the content of the final report. A draft of the final report, prepared by the senior commissioner, will be presented at the session on April 22 with a final report available for approval on April 29. Final revised papers will be due by Friday May 2, 2000. We will make a trip to the U.S. State Department to present the final report during reading period the week of May 5, 2000.

Individual papers are expected to be approximately 20 double-spaced pages in length, with tables, graphs and references additional. Each report should be preceded by an abstract which distills the essence of the findings of the report into one paragraph. The end of each paper should be followed by a list of references that were consulted in writing the paper. Web sites, interviews, and paper documents should all be listed here. The final group report will be at most 25 pages and will synthesize the findings and recommendations of the individual papers.

Week 1. Tuesday February 4, 2003. Framing the issues.

Overview of sustainable development issues: Growth in global population and consumption, increasing disparity between wealthy and poor countries and individuals, increasing global energy consumption, climate change, deforestation, urbanization, water contamination, fishery depletion, habitat loss and decreasing biodiversity. What can be done?

Reading:

Protecting Our Planet, Securing Our Future – Linkages among Global Environmental Issues and Human Needs, UNEP, NASA, World Bank, 1998, The book is available on the web at: <http://www-esd.worldbank.org/planet/>

Follow the link called ‘contents’ and read the Executive summary: pp. xv-xvii, Part 1, Introduction and Part 2, Global Environmental Issues: pp. 1-30 and whatever else you are particularly interested in.

United Nations, Johannesburg Summit 2002, Global Challenge, Global Opportunity: Trends in Sustainable Development.

McDevitt, TM., World Population Profile: 1998, U.S. Census Bureau, 1999, pp. 1-4, 9-18. The complete document is available at <http://blue.census.gov/ipc/prod/wp98/wp98.pdf>.

Week 2. Tuesday February 11, 2003. Putting the international negotiations on sustainable development in context – From Rio to Johannesburg.

Guest Speaker: Mr. Daniel Reifsnyder, Director of the Global Change Office, U.S. Department of State. Overview of international negotiations, agreements and commitments from Rio to Johannesburg. Lead up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg.

Reading:

United Nations Secretary General, "Towards a Sustainable Future", May 14, 2002.

Johannesburg Summit 2002, Key Outcomes, United Nations, September 2002.

World Bank. The Environment and the Millennium Development Goals.

World Bank. Johannesburg and Beyond: An agenda for action.

Week 3. Tuesday February 18, 2003. Key Issues in Sustainable Development: Poverty, Energy, Health, Globalization, Production and Consumption patterns, Deforestation and Biodiversity

Reading:

United Nations. Johannesburg Summit 2002: Fact Sheets.

Week 4. Tuesday February 25, 2003.

Guest Speaker: Mr. John Margolis, Head of U.S. Delegation in Johannesburg, U.S. Department of State. Key players in Johannesburg, agreements and commitments. What is the U.S. contributing?

Reading and references:

Statement by Jonathan Margolis, Head of Delegation, United States of America, May 27, 2002.

The report of the world summit includes all of the final documents including the important plan of implementation and political declaration:
http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/summit_docs/131302_wssd_report_reissued.pdf

U.S. Non-Paper, "The Commission on Sustainable Development: Focusing on Implementation, December 2002.

The following web site provides access to various U.S. State Department reference documents, briefings, partnership initiatives on sustainable development, and various other related links.

<http://www.state.gov/g/oes/sus/>

Week 5. Tuesday March 4, 2003

Guest Speaker: Mr. David Waskow, Friends of the Earth. What did Johannesburg accomplish? What should priorities be? What should the role of partnerships be? What are the best routes to achieving sustainable development?

Reading:

The Stakeholder Forum's site on the Summit <http://www.earthsummit2002.org> is excellent. Their paper on the future of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/es/issues/Governance/csdfuture.pdf> is interesting. Also, the Issues site has a lot of useful summaries:

<http://www.earthsummit2002.org/es/issues/>

The UN's page on partnerships, http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/sustainable_dev/sustainable_dev.html provides a good overview of what is going on. There is currently talk over whether the UN should form a partnerships office, and how they are going to be managed. NGOs and the developing countries want heavy management, OECD wants little management. The US is very supportive of partnerships and nearly half of the U.S. delegation in Johannesburg were working strictly on partnerships.

Paper outlines due, Friday March 7, 2003.

Week 6. Tuesday March 11, 2003

Overview of renewable energy technologies. Objectives: reduce local air pollution and emission of greenhouse gases. Examples of successful technology transfer.

Reading (on course blackboard site):

Expanding Electricity Access to Remote Areas: Off-Grid Rural Electrification in Developing Countries, World Power, 2000.

Spring Break

Week 7. Tuesday March 25, 2003. . Discussion of integration of individual research into group research project and report. Overall objectives. Goals of presentation to U.S. State Department.

Week 8. Week of April 1, 2003. Individual Consultations. No class meeting.

Draft research papers due, Friday April 4, 2003.

Week 9. April 8, 2003. Oral presentations start. Discussion of final report.

Week 10. April 15, 2003. Oral presentations continue.

Week 11. April 22, 2003. Presentation of final report. Discussion of revisions.

Week 12. April 29, 2003. Discussion and approval of final report.

**** Final revised papers are due by Friday May 2, 2003. ****

Week of May 5, 2003. 1-day trip to U.S. Department of State to make final presentation.

Additional Reference Material available on the web:

The Millennium Project (<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/html/about.htm#millproj>) is the main effort inside of the UN right now. This document summarizes the Millennium Development goals which are essentially the goals of sustainable development. The United Nations seems more committed to implementing these than anything that came out of WSSD.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) report on the Summit is quite good: <http://www.iisd.org/publications/publication.asp?pno=485> You can download a variety of papers here on a spectrum of subjects ranging from economic policy to environmental security.

Earth Negotiations Bulletin provides daily coverage of all negotiations.

The following is the link to all the WSSD related meetings:

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/vol22/index.htm>. There's a lot of detail here you may not be interested in, but it will give you a feel for how the negotiations are conducted.

The International Institute for Environment and Development's (IIED) work in preparation for the Summit was very good. You can find their documents at: <http://www.iied.org/wssd/index.html>.

This speech by Annan is a nice summary of the WEHAB (Water, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity; defined by the Secretary General as the major sectoral areas for development) goals, and it's short: http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/media_info/speeches/sg_speech_amnh.pdf