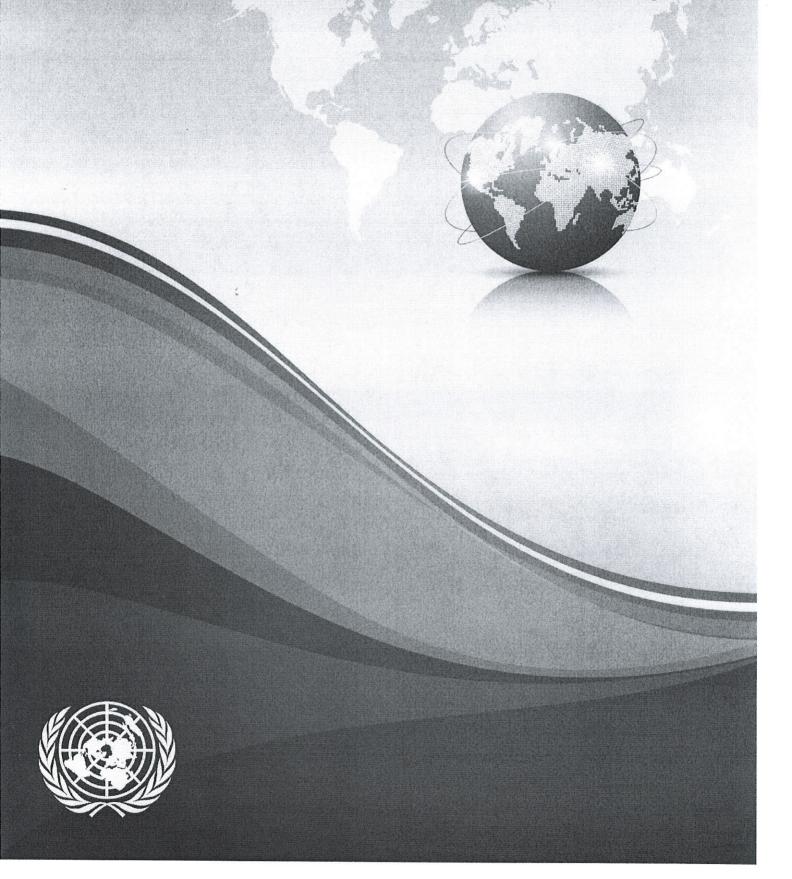# Prototype
Global Sustainable Development Report

1. Introduction

"The population explosion; poverty; ignorance and disease, the pollution of our surroundings, the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and biological and chemical agents of destruction are all parts of a vicious circle. Each is important and urgent but dealing with them one by one would be wasted effort." (Indira Gandhi, Stockholm Conference 1972)

1.1. Context

Bringing together great global issues at the UN: peace and security, freedom, development, environment[1]

Since the creation of the United Nations, the world's peoples have aspired to make progress on the great global issues of peace and security, freedom, development, and environment. At the end of World War II the primary focus was on peace which was sustained globally throughout the cold war, but broken locally in many places. From the 1950s, the aspiration of freedom was expressed in the struggle to end colonialism and oppression, and later to extend human rights. The success in attaining national independence was followed in the 1960s by a focus on economic development to provide the basic necessities for the poorest two-thirds of the world and higher standards of living for all. In the 1970s, global values for nature and the environment emerged, as illustrated by the UN *Conference on the Human Environment* held in Stockholm in 1972.

Peace and security, freedom, development, and environment remain prominent aspirations, and it has long been acknowledged that they are closely interlinked (Table 1). High-level panels and commissions, major documents, and global conferences have made a moral and pragmatic case for them. Insufficient development progress can threaten peace and security and vice versa. Reduced freedom can threaten peace and vice versa. Development provides the capacity to sustain nature's life support systems, but can also threaten them, in turn setting back development. The concept of *sustainable development* brought together development and environment.

Table 1. Sustainable development – bringing together great global issues at the UN

Global issues	UN Report / World Commission	Year
Freedom and Development	Brandt report, Independent Commission on International Development Issues	1980
Peace, Freedom, Development	Palme Report, Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues	1982
Peace, Environment, Development	Brundtland Report, World Commission on Environment and Development	1987

Sustainable development objectives have been widely defined along three dimensions as "economic, environmental and social" or "ecology, economy, and equity".

The origins of the concept of sustainable development

The concept of sustainable development has a very long history in science. For example, already in 1713 Hans Carl von Carlowitz referred to "sustainable yield" (*nachhaltiger Ertrag*) in the context of sustainable forestry management.[2] Especially since the late 1960s, there has been a large amount of scientific literature on sustainable development issues. Natural and social scientists highlighted a series of sustainable development issues and recommended integrated policy action in many areas, e.g., on development, poverty, hunger, employment, equity between generations and countries, gender equality, environmental pollution, resource scarcity, and on the means to achieve policy objectives in these areas, such as technology, finance, capacity building and trade.

The Brundtland report[3] of 1987, entitled *Our Common Future*, defined the concept of *sustainable development* as "...*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*". The report built on earlier scientific perspectives on the interdependence of society and environment pioneered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The report also illustrated the fact that conflicts can arise from pre-emption of development options or from environmental degradation, and that conflict is also a major cause of unsustainable development. The concept of sustainable development was subsequently adopted by Governments at the *Earth Summit* of 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, together with a set of *Rio Principles*[4] and a global action plan, *Agenda 21*,[5] which included many goals and targets. Some of these goals became part of the Millennium Development Goals a decade later.