



ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH
STRICT ANTHROPOCENTRIC
LAWS:

A Feigned Commitment to Posterity?

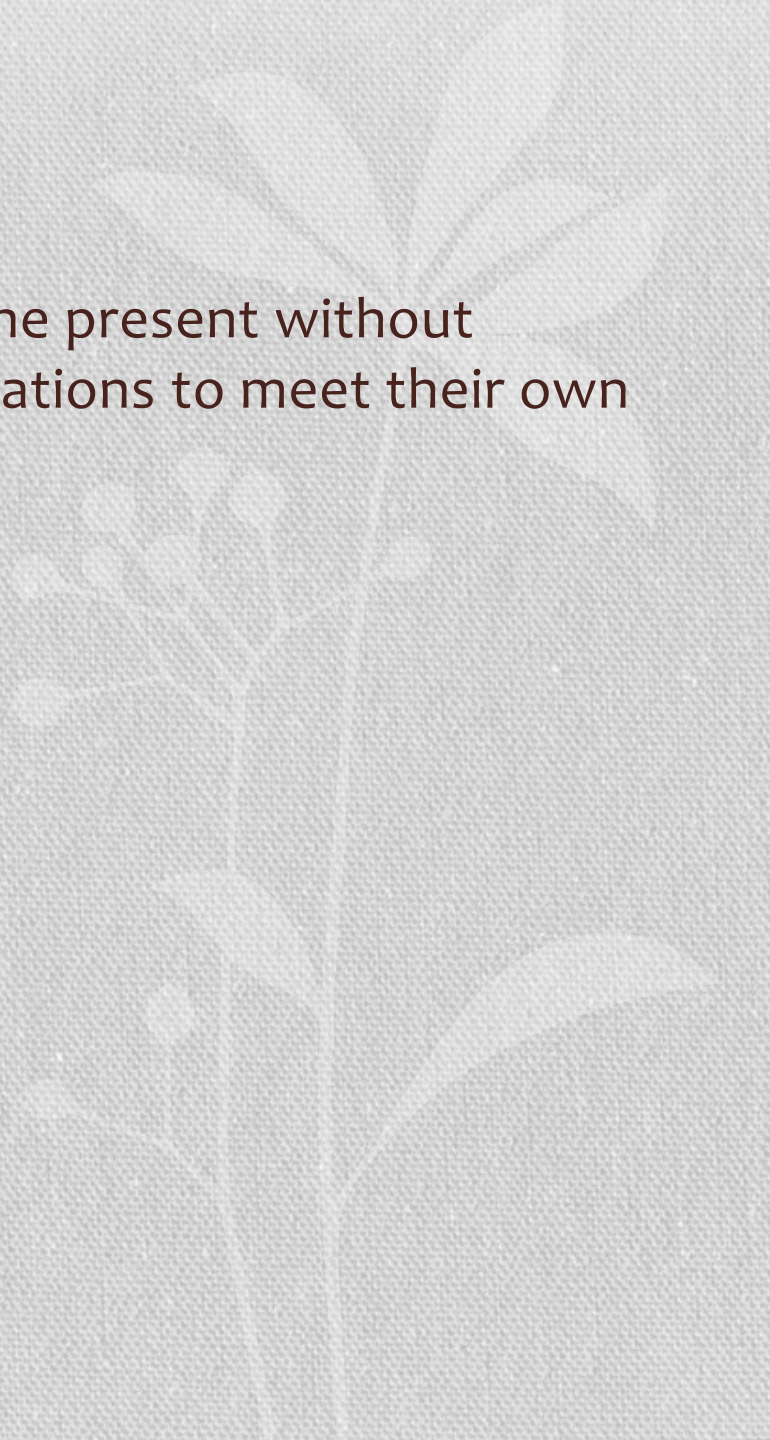
***Ngozi F. Stewart
(University of Leicester, UK)**



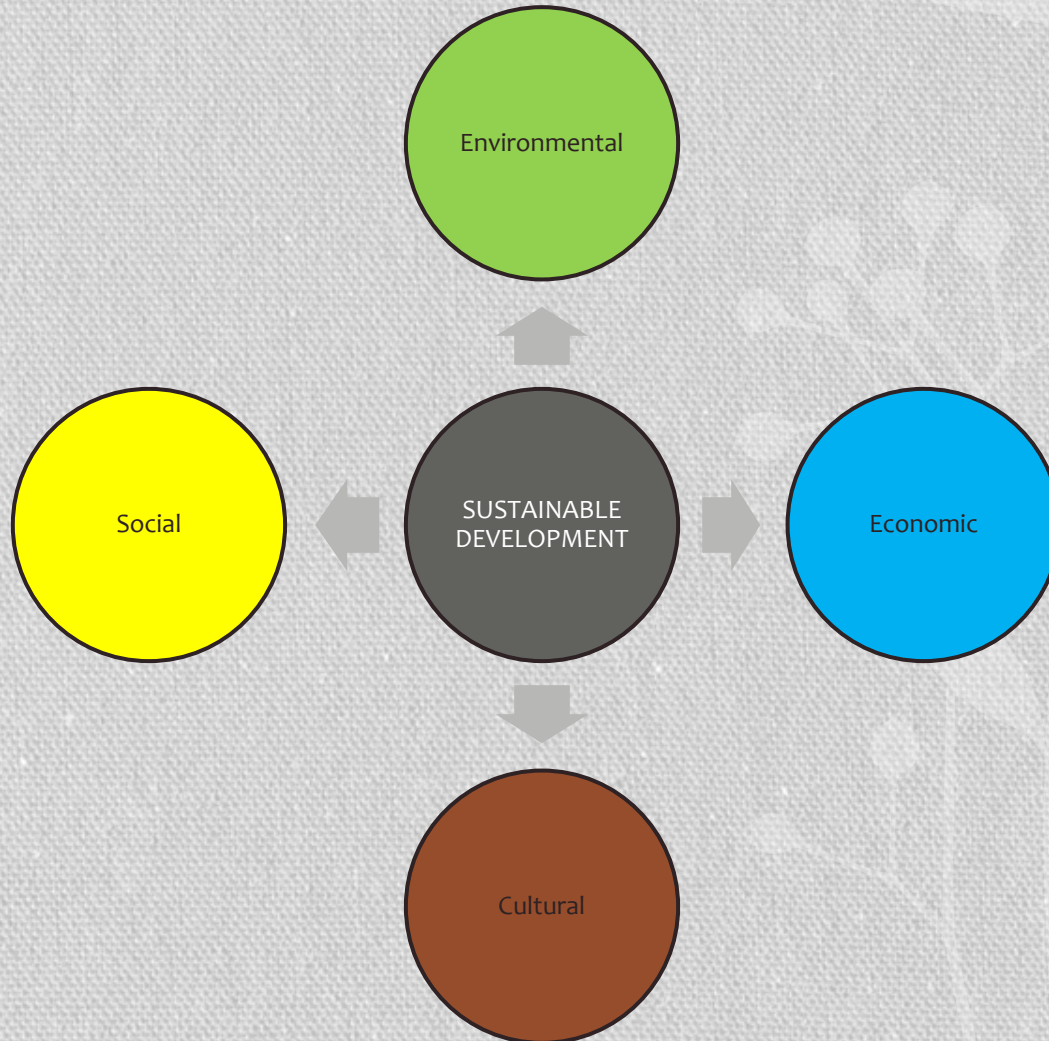
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A Tired Term?

Brundtland report

- ‘Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.



A Holistic Concept



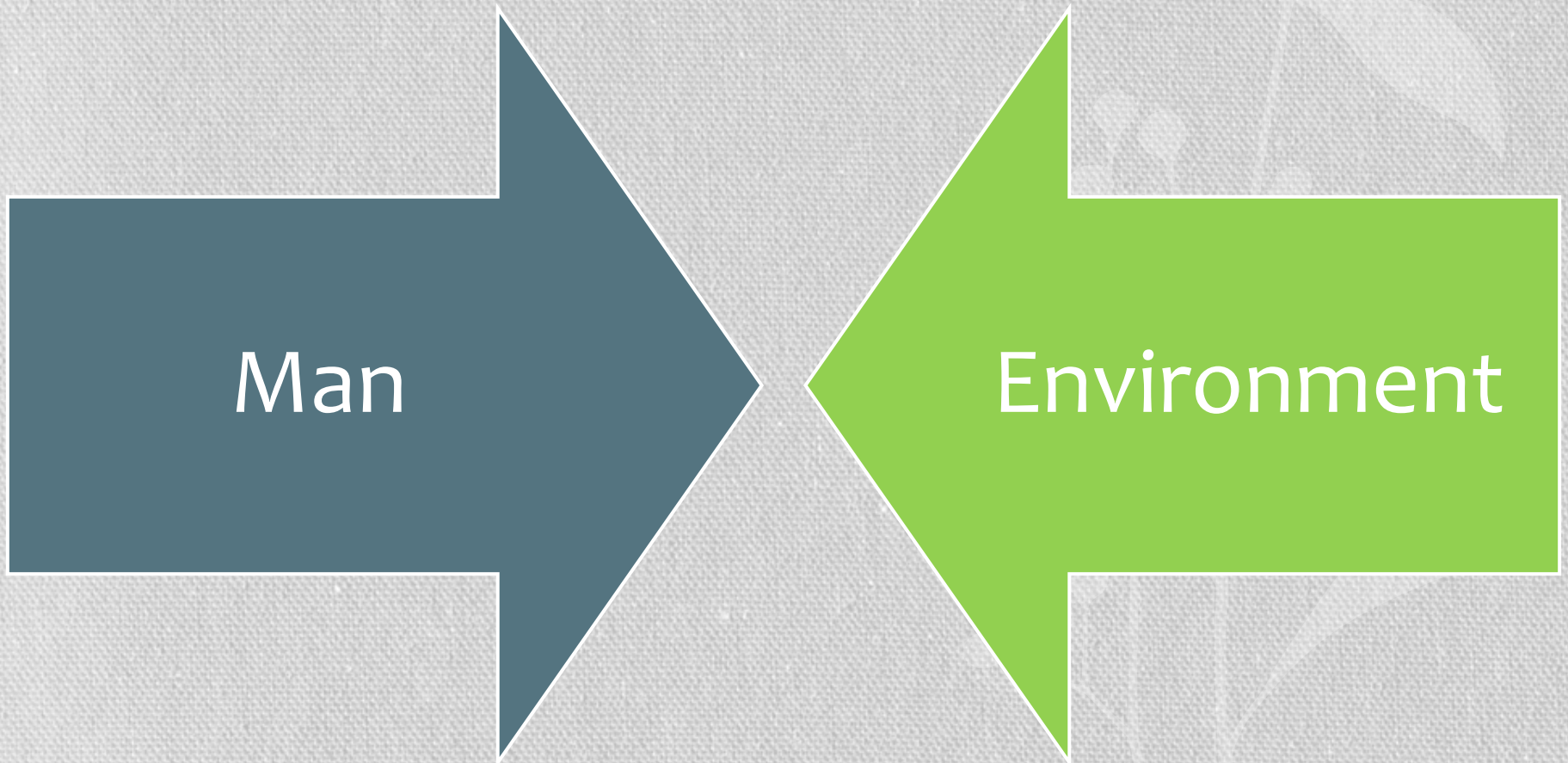
Rationale for Sustainable Development : Divergence



Man

Environment

End Result of Sustainable Development: Convergence (Through Laws)



Ethical underpinnings of Environmental Laws

- Animal Liberationism (Singer, Reagan et al)
- Biocentrism (Goodpaster, Taylor et al)
- Ecocentrism (Leopold, Rowe et al)
- Anthropocentrism (strict) (Aristotle, Kant et al)
- Anthropocentrism (Weak/enlightened) (Hargrove, Norton et al)

Are the Current Environmental Protection Laws Sustainable Development Compliant? i.e Are they hinged on a preservationist ethic?

International Laws:

- World Charter For Nature (1982)
- Earth Charter (1987)
- Rio Declaration (1992)
- Universal Declaration on the Rights of Mother Nature (Proposed) (2010)

Municipal Laws:

- 70 % of the Constitutions in the world provide for a right to a Clean environment;
- Several environmental pollution laws (civil and Criminal);
- Less than 1% are preservationist (Ecuador, Belgium, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Austria)

Two broad ethical categories

(which is more appropriate for the objective of sustainable development)



Ecocentrism



OR



Anthropocentrism

‘Sustainable Development’ (Revisited)

Objective of the concept: Anthropocentric

Development that meet the needs of the present (**strictly anthropocentric**)

Without compromising the ability of future generations (**weakly anthropocentric**) to meet their own needs.

Effective Method of achieving the concept: Ecocentric

It is more holistic and more likely to **preserve** the environment for future generations.

A Paradigm shift?



Conclusion

‘Conservation is a state of harmony between man and land’ (Leopold). ‘If ecosystem management is to take hold and flourish, the relationship between the new goal of preserving ecological integrity and the old standard of providing goods and services for humans must be reconciled’ (Grumbine).

This depends on utilitarians (anthropocentrists) recognising the folly of relentless consumption and environmentalists (ecocentrists) accepting the reality of society’s continued growth.

What is advocated is sustainable development in an environmentally and socially-responsible manner through discussion, redesign, and active negotiation with potentially-affected communities.

‘Treat the earth well. . .it was not given to you by your parents. . .it was lent to you by your children. . .’

(Kenyan Proverb)