

The Brundtland Report and the Definition of Sustainable Development

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Words in bold are defined at the end of the text.

The Brundtland Report, officially known as *Our Common Future*, is a **comprehensive** document written in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) and chaired by the then Prime Minister of Norway, [Gro Harlem Brundtland](#). The report is widely seen as the foundation for the concept of sustainable development, a term which has since become a **catchphrase** for a variety of environmental and development initiatives around the world.

The Brundtland Report defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This concept of sustainable development is based on the idea that natural resources, such as air, water, and soil, must be managed in a way that will not **deplete** them, cause irreversible damage, or put future generations at risk.

The report also suggested that economic development, environmental protection, and social justice should be balanced in order to achieve this goal. The Brundtland Report argued that the current development model was unsustainable and that a new approach was needed to ensure the future of the planet. It **stressed** the need for an integrated approach to development, which takes into account the environment, economic growth, and social equity. The report also **outlined** a number of specific policy recommendations to help countries move towards sustainable development, such as investing in renewable energy sources, improving access to basic services, and promoting environmentally sound technologies.

The Brundtland Report has had a lasting impact on the way we think about sustainable development. Its ideas have been adopted by many countries and organisations, including the United Nations, which adopted the report’s definition of sustainable development in its Agenda 21 program. The principles of sustainable development, outlined in the report, can be seen in the many environmental and development initiatives around the world. For example, the Paris Agreement, a global agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is based on the principles of sustainable development outlined in the Brundtland Report. In conclusion, the Brundtland Report was a **groundbreaking** document that helped to define the concept of sustainable development and shape the way we approach environmental and development issues. Its ideas are still as relevant today as they were in 1987, and its influence can be seen in many of the environmental and development initiatives around the world.

Comprehensive: all-embracing, covering many things/nearly everything. **Catchphrase:** a well-known, frequently-used phrase. **To deplete:** to use up something, to exhaust, to run down. **To stress** something: to emphasise, to insist on something. **To outline:** to summarise, to indicate the borders of something. **Groundbreaking:** new, original, beginning work on new ground.

See also, this [interesting historical interview with Gro Harlem Brundtland](#) who was a leading woman politician at a time when fewer women held prominent political positions. It seems dated now, but is an interesting historical document. “People are not used to women deciding, women saying, you know, straight-forward, direct things...”