

Environmental milestones

1972

Stockholm Conference. The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held from the 5th to 16th of June 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden. As a result of this conference, the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was issued providing 26 principles for preserving and enhancing the human environment.



1982

World Charter for Nature. The General Assembly of the United Nations in October 28, 1982 adopted the World Charter for Nature which includes four general principles:

- Respect for nature, without disrupting its core processes
- Ensure the survival and viability of all species, and their habitats, on earth
- Protect species of unique character, habitats of endangered species and representative examples of all types of ecosystems
- Maintain the productivity of ecosystems and organisms used by human kind, without compromising their integrity or that of other ecosystems and species that coexist with them.
- Protect nature from the destruction caused by war and other hostile acts

1983

Brundtland Commission. The World Commission on Environment and Development, led by former prime minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland (1939 -), was created to address the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and its implications for social and economic development. The report "Our Common Future" was published in 1987, largely promoting the concept of "sustainable development"

1992

The 1992 Earth Summit. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, known as the "Earth Summit", was held from 3rd to 14th June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Five important documents were the outcome of this meeting:

Two international agreements;

- The Convention on Biological Diversity
- The Framework Convention on Climate Change

Two principles;

- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
- Principles of management, conservation and sustainable development of forests.

An agenda of actions;

- Agenda 21

2000

2000 Earth Charter. The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles to build a just, sustainable and peaceful global society for the 21st century. The charter has been promoted and accepted by the United Nations and supported by thousands of civilian organizations. It was launched in June 2000 in The Hague, Netherlands.

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Commitments:

I. Respect and care for the community of life

- Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
- Caring for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
- Build democratic societies that are just, participative, sustainable and peaceful.
- Ensure that the richness and beauty of the land is preserved for present and future generations.

To realize these four commitments the following are required:

II. Ecological integrity

- Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and natural processes that sustain life.
- Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, proceed with caution.
- Adopt patterns of production, consumption and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights and community welfare.
- Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.

III. Social and economic justice

- Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative.

- Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.

- Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care and economic opportunity.

- Defend the right of everyone, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, physical health and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

IV. Democracy, non-violence and peace

- Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making and access to justice.

- Integrate into formal education and life-long learning, skills, knowledge and values necessary for sustainable living.

- Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.

- Promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence and peace.

"Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life."

Millennium Goals (UN). In 2000 the Millennium Declaration was adopted at the United Nations with eight goals to be achieved by 2015..

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Universal Education

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- Gender equality
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV / AIDS
- Environmental sustainability
- Develop a global partnership

1998-2005

Assessment of the Millennium Ecosystems. This international assessment began in 1998 and ended in 2005. The assessment analyzes the consequences of ecosystem change for human well-being and the options for responding to changes.

Conclusions of the assessment:

- All the people of the world depend on nature and ecosystem services to lead a decent, healthy and safe life.
- In recent decades, humans have made unprecedented changes to ecosystems in order to meet growing demands for food, water, materials and energy.
- These changes have helped improve the lives of billions of people, but at the same time have weakened nature's ability to provide other key services such as purification of air and water, protection from disasters and provision of medicines.
- Among the leading problems identified by this assessment are: the extreme situation of many of the

fish stocks of the world; the serious vulnerability of the two billion people living in dry regions faced with the loss of ecosystem services including water supply; and increasing threats to ecosystems from climate change and nutrient pollution.

- Human activities have led the planet to the edge of an episode of mass extinction of species, further threatening our own well-being.
- The loss of services derived from ecosystems is a significant barrier to achieving the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty, hunger and disease.
- The global pressures on ecosystems will increase in coming decades unless attitudes and human actions change.
- It is more likely that measures to conserve natural resources will succeed if local communities are given ownership, and if they participate in sharing benefits and are involved in decision making.
- With the technology and knowledge available it is possible to significantly reduce the human impact on ecosystems. But it is unlikely to be fully utilized while those ecosystem services are perceived to be free and unlimited, and their total value is not taken into consideration.
- Better protection of natural assets will require coordinated efforts among all sectors of governments, businesses and institutions. The productivity of ecosystems depends on the policies implemented, including those relating to investment, trade, subsidies, taxes and regulation.