



## Defining Sustainability – A Hundred Perspectives

Sustainability as an emergent concept reveals deep concerns about fundamental values and our own continued existence. While each person's definition of sustainability is seen to be the most relevant, the question is a universal one and common to all.

Whether our definition of sustainability is anthropocentric, biocentric, egocentric, ecocentric, econocentric, sociocentric, worldcentric or perhaps simply personally eccentric, they are all valid.

Collected here is a retrospective look at over one hundred perspectives from an evolving list of thousands of definitions of sustainability, reflecting the different conceptualizations and applications of this emergent concept.

### Sustainability is ...

1. "Sustainability – n. the property of being sustainable" – Princeton University
2. "Sustainable development seeks to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future" - World Commission on Environment and Development (page 40: 1987)
3. "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains two key concepts: the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs." - World Commission on Environment and Development (page 43: 1987)
4. "Ecological sustainable development is using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life

depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased." National Strategy for Ecological Sustainable Development (Australia)

5. "Sustainable development is based on the principle that the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations." - 1992 Rio Earth Summit
6. "Output Rule: Waste emissions should be within the assimilative capacity of the environment to absorb without unacceptable degradation of its future waste-absorptive capacity or other important services. Input Rules: a) Renewables: harvest rates of renewable resources should be within the regenerative capacity of the ecosystem. b) Non-renewables: depletion rates should be equal to the rate at which renewable substitutes can be developed and deployed." - Daly, in Photiades, 1998
7. "Sustainability is a means of configuring civilization and human activity so that society and its members are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential in the present, while preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and planning and acting for the ability to maintain these ideals indefinitely." - World IQ
8. "Sustainability means using, developing and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs, ... simultaneously meeting environmental, economic and community needs." - State of Oregon
9. "Sustainability means living within the resources of the planet without damaging the environment now or within the future. It also means having an economic system that provides a genuine quality of life, rather than depending on increased consumption." - West London Friends of the Earth
10. "Sustainability is a relationship between dynamic cultural, economic, and biophysical systems associated across the landscape such that quality of life for humans continues -- both for individuals and cultures. It is a relationship in which the effects of human activities do not threaten the

integrity of the self-organizing systems that provide the context for these activities. An ecosystem has integrity if it retains its complexity and capacity for self-organization (arguably its health) and sufficient diversity, within its structures and functions, to maintain the ecosystem's self-organizing complexity through time." - Eco-Watch (Iverson, Cornett)

11. "Living on the earth's income rather than eroding its capital. It means keeping the consumption of renewable natural resources within the limits of their replenishment. It means handing down to successive generations not only man-made wealth, but also natural wealth, such as clean and adequate water supplies, good arable land, a wealth of wildlife, and ample forests"- The United Kingdom's Sustainable Development Strategy
12. "Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of current and future generations through simultaneous environmental, social and economic improvement." - State Sustainability Strategy (Western Australia)
13. "The principle of ensuring that our actions today do not limit the range of, social, environmental and economic options open to future generations." - Maroochy Shire
14. "Sustainability is the economic and social changes that promote human prosperity and quality of life without causing ecological or social damage. It is a new way of thinking about an age-old concern: ensuring that our children and grandchildren inherit a tomorrow that is at least as good as today, preferably better. We want to make sure that the way we live our lives is sustainable - that it can continue and keep improving for a long, long time." - City of Seattle
15. "But in its fullest sense, sustainability involves a balance of economic, environmental, and social concerns considered over the long term." - Columbia University Biosphere 2
16. "A primary goal of sustainable development is to achieve a reasonable (however defined) level of fairly distributed economic well-being that can be maintained for many human generations - Goodland, R. and Ledoc, G. (1987)

17. "Sustainable development means the will to follow a rational approach to economic policies; to show respect for future generations by integrating concern for environmental protection into decision-making; and progressively to evolve towards the full participation of all concerned actors." - Barboza, N. (2000)
18. "The simplest definition of a sustainable activity is that it can be continued for the foreseeable future. And this has at least three dimensions: it means not unreasonably depleting natural resources, not producing waste products that significantly alter natural systems, and not undermining social stability." Lowe, I. (1990)
19. "Sustainable development means:
  1. ensuring self-sustaining improvements in productivity and quality of life of communities and societies;
  2. ensuring that production processes do not overexploit the natural resource base and compromise the quality of the environment, thus limiting the options of the poor, the present and future generations; and
  3. ensuring that people have basic human rights and freedoms to participate societies."- Singh, N. and Titi, V. (1995)
20. "Sustainability means creating a world in which we have:
  - 1) A positive ecological and sociological footprint (meaning we leave behind wetlands, not toxic waste dumps; healthy, developmentally appropriate educational systems, not ineffective relics from the Victorian era)
  - 2) Cross-sectoral coordination amongst the public and private sectors to nurture global economic development and growth (not physical growth, but in standard of living) to occur within our ecological limits, while delivering social justice
  - 3) An alignment of the different levels of our individual and collective consciousness so that we can create, maintain, and healthily evolve all of this.
    - Barrett Brown (2004), Integral Institute for Sustainability

21. "Sustainability requires us to ensure the Four System Conditions:

- (a) Substances from the Earth's crust must not systematically increase in nature. (This means that fossil fuels, metals, and other minerals can not be extracted at a faster rate than their re-deposit back into the Earth's crust.)
- (b) Substances produced by society must not systematically increase in nature. (This means that things like plastics, ozone-depleting chemicals, carbon dioxide, waste materials, etc., must not be produced at a faster rate than they can be broken down in nature. This requires a greatly decreased production of naturally occurring substances that are systematically accumulating beyond natural levels, and a phase-out of persistent human-made substances not found in nature.)
- (c) The physical basis for productivity and diversity of nature must not be systematically diminished. (This means that we cannot harvest or manipulate ecosystems in such a way as to diminish their productive capacity, or threaten the natural diversity of life forms (biodiversity). This requires that we critically examine how we harvest renewable resources, and (adjust our consumption and land-use practices to fall well within the regenerative capacities of ecosystems.)
- (d) We must be fair and efficient in meeting basic human needs. (This means that basic human needs must be met with the most resource-efficient methods possible, including a just resource distribution.)"-  
The Natural Step

22. "Sustainability can be defined in three ways. First, as debt sustainability. Second, as project or donor sustainability, so when funding for the start up costs of a project conclude, the project can continue. Third, sustainability of the environment and ecosystems .... we must scrap our long-held embrace of the first two definitions of sustainability in order to help achieve the third. Environmental sustainability is defined as preserving the ecosystem while allowing the poor to improve their economic condition."- Jeffrey Sachs 2002

23. "Sustainability is defined in economic terms as 'non-declining capital' taking capital to mean not just monetary and human capital, as economists conventionally consider capital to be, but 'natural capital', being the value to human beings of the Earth itself." Dresner, 2002
24. "The concept of sustainability amounts to a call to deal with the entire complex of global problems as an interrelated whole. This challenge goes well beyond the scope of issues individual organizations and governments have had to deal with before, and it demands new ways of thinking and acting. A sustainable society is one that has in place informational mechanism to keep in check the positive feedback loops that cause exponential population and [physical] capital growth. To be socially sustainable the combination of population, capital and technology in society would have to be configured so that the material living standard is adequate and secure for everyone." – Hardin Tibbs
25. Sustainability exists as a steady dynamic state ... "if:
  1. Its rates of use of renewable resources do not exceed their rates of regeneration.
  2. Its rates of use of nonrenewable resources do not exceed the rate at which sustainable renewable substitutes are developed.
  3. Its rates of pollution emission do not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment." - Herman Daly
26. "Qualitative change of a finite and physically non-growing economic system in dynamic equilibrium with the environment." This is because any physical subsystem of a finite and physically non-growing earth must itself eventually become non-growing. The term sustainable growth would then become self-contradictory, but sustainable development does not.
27. "Taking nothing from the earth that is not renewable and doing no harm to the biosphere." - Ray Anderson, Interface
28. "Transforming our environmentally destructive economy into one that can sustain progress depends on a shift in economic mindset, recognizing that the economy is part of the earth's ecosystem and can sustain progress only

if it is restructured so that it is compatible with it. A stable relationship between earth and economy - an environmentally sustainable economy an eco- economy, requires that the principles of ecology establish the framework for the formulation of economic policy. Economics integrated into ecology." - Lester R. Brown, Worldwatch Institute/Earth Policy Institute/Eco-Economy

29. "I don't use the word because I think it's undefinable (at least after so many folks have used it to mean so many different things) and not very useful." - Amory Lovins, CEO, Rocky Mountain Institute
30. "I've avoided trying to pose one. If I had to give one, tho, I'd likely use Christopher Juniper's "operations that cause no net loss of human or natural capital." Christopher also uses the phrase "Preservation of prosperity opportunity into the future", especially for business audiences. This, however, leaves out the concept of being restorative. It also ignores the time scale issue - it is essentially impossible to say if an action is sustainable in the short term. Walter Stahel, the father of the cradle to cradle concept talks of sustainability as a long term vision, that includes environmental protection, human health and safety, efficient use of resources and cultural and social sustainability." - Hunter Lovins, CEO, Natural Capitalism Group
31. "Sustainable development is a dynamic process which enables all people to realize their potential and improve their quality of life in ways which simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth's life support systems." - Forum For The Future
32. "Improving the quality of life for all living beings within the capacity of nature to provide that life." - Paul Hawken
33. "Sustainability refers to a vector of development (said 'vector' understood as containing a set of normatively desired socio-economic objectives and targets) the realization of which does not normally lead to the sustained erosion of the natural capital of the society (where 'natural capital' is understood as referring to both the stock of environmental resources and the human socio-cultural assets used in creating the knowledge that defines the mode(s) of interaction between human society and the

environmental resources), and for which the period of optimal decision-making always reflects considerations of inter-generational equity and welfare." - Nikoi Olai Kote (Economics Professor at School for International Training)

34. "Responding to all people's basic needs with what they have in co-evolution with nature." - Gunter Pauli (Founder Ecover, Founder ZERI - Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives)
35. "The sustainable society is one that lives within the self-perpetuating limits of its environment. That society... is not a "no growth" society... It is rather, a society that recognizes the limits of growth... [and] looks for alternative ways of growing." - J. Coomer (ed), "The Nature of the Quest for a Sustainable Society," (1979)
36. "Sustainable development is the maintenance of essential ecological processes and life support systems, the preservation of genetic diversity, and the sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems." - IUCN, WWF and UNEP. The World Conservation Strategy. Gland, Switzerland. 1980.
37. "Sustainable development - development that is likely to achieve lasting satisfaction of human needs and improvement of the quality of human life." - R. Allen, "How to Save the World" (1980)
38. "The World Commission does not believe that a dismal scenario of mounting destruction of national global potential for development - indeed, of earth's capacity to support life -- is an inescapable destiny. The problems are planetary - but they are not insoluble. I believe that history will record that in this crisis the two greatest resources, land and people, will redeem the promise of development. If we take care of nature, nature will take care of us. Conservation has truly of age when it acknowledges that if we want to save part of the system, we have to save the system itself. This is the essence of what we call sustainable development. There are many dimensions to sustainability. First it requires the elimination of poverty and deprivation. Second, it requires the conservation and enhancement of the resources base which alone can ensure that the elimination of poverty is permanent. Third, it requires a broadening of the concept of development so that it covers not only economic growth, but

also social and cultural development. Forth, and most important, it requires unification of economics and ecology in decision-making at all levels. " - Prime Minister H. Gro Brundtland. "Sir Peter Scott Lecture," Bristol, 8 October, 1986.

39. "A major challenge of the coming decades is to learn how long-term large-scale interactions between environment and development can be better managed to increase the prospects for ecologically sustainable improvements in human well-being." - W. Clark and R. Munn. Sustainable Development of the Biosphere (1986)
40. "The core of the idea of sustainability, then, is the concept that current decisions should not impair the prospects for maintaining or improving future living standards... This implies that our economic systems should be managed so that we can live off the dividend of our resources, maintaining and improving the asset base. This principle also has much in common with the ideal concept of income that accountants seek to determine: the greatest amount that can be consumed in the current period without reducing prospects for consumption in the future. This does not mean that sustainable development demands the preservation of the current stock of natural resources or any particular mix of human, physical and natural assets. As development proceeds, the composition of the underlying asset base changes. There is broad agreement that pursuing policies that imperil the welfare of future generations, who are unrepresented in any political or economic forum, is unfair." W. Clark and R. Munn. Sustainable Development of the Biosphere (1986).
41. "Sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional changes are made consistent with future as well as present needs." - World Commission on Environment and Development. Our Common Future (1987).
42. "The concept of sustainable economic development as applied to the Third World... is therefore directly concerned with increasing the material standard of living of the poor at the "grassroots" level, which can be quantitatively measured in terms of increased food, real income,

educational services, health care, sanitation and water supply, emergency stocks of food and cash, etc., and only indirectly concerned with economic growth at the aggregate, commonly national, level. In general terms, the primary objective is reducing the absolute poverty of the world's poor through providing lasting and secure livelihoods that minimize resource depletion, environmental degradation, cultural disruption and social instability." E. Barbier. "The Concept of Sustainable Economic Development" (1987).

43. "Sustainable development is here defined as a pattern of social and structured economic transformations (i.e. development) which optimizes the economic and societal benefits available in the present, without jeopardizing the likely potential for similar benefits in the future. A primary goal of sustainable development is to achieve a reasonable (however defined) and equitably distributed level of economic well-being that can be perpetuated continually for many human generations." - R. Goodland and G. Ledoc. "Neoclassical Economics and Principles of Sustainable Development" (1987).
44. "Sustainable development implies using renewable natural resources in a manner which does not eliminate or degrade them, or otherwise diminish their usefulness for future generations... Sustainable development further implies using non-renewable (exhaustible) mineral resources in a manner which does not unnecessarily preclude easy access to them by future generations ... Sustainable development also implies depleting non-renewable energy resources at a slow enough rate so as to ensure the high probability of an orderly society transition to renewable energy sources." R. Goodland and G. Ledoc. "Neoclassical Economics and Principles of Sustainable Development" (1987).
45. "Sustainable development has become an article of faith, a shibboleth: often used but little explained. Does it amount to a strategy? Does it apply only to renewable resources? What does the term actually mean? In broad terms the concept of sustainable development encompasses: 1. Help for the very poor because they are left with no option other than to destroy their environment; 2. The idea of self-reliant development, within natural resource constraints; 3. The idea of cost-effective development using

differing economic criteria to the traditional approach; that is to say development should not degrade environmental quality, nor should it reduce productivity in the long run; 4. The great issues of health control, appropriate technologies, food self-reliance, clean water and shelter for all; 5. The notion that people-centered initiatives are needed; human beings, in other words, are the resources in the concept." - Mustafa Tolba Sustainable Development - Constraints and Opportunities (1987).

46. "Sustainable development - economic development that can continue indefinitely because it is based on the exploitation of renewable resources and causes insufficient environmental damage for this to pose an eventual limit." - M. Allaby, MacMillan Dictionary of the Environment 3rd ed. (1988).
47. "Sustainable development - to be the indefinite survival of the human species (with a quality of life beyond mere biological survival) through the maintenance of basic life support systems (air, water, land, biota) and the existence of infrastructures and institutions which distribute and protect the components of these systems." - B.J. Brown et.al. "Global Sustainability: Towards Measurement," (1988).
48. "The basic idea [of sustainable development] is simple in the context of natural resources (excluding exhaustibles) and environments: the use made of these inputs to the development process should be sustainable through time... If we now apply the idea to resources, sustainability ought to mean that a given stock of resources - trees, soil quality, water, and so on - should not decline." - A. Markandya and D. Pearce. "Natural Environments and the Social Rate of Discount." (1988).
49. "Thus we need to nail down the concept of sustainable development. I propose five increasingly comprehensive definitions. First we can start at the local level and simply ask whether a region's agricultural and industrial practices can continue indefinitely. Will they destroy the local resource base and environment or, just as bad, the local people and their cultural system? Or will the resource base, environment, technologies and culture evolve over time in a mutually reinforcing manner? This first definition ignores whether there might be subsidies to the region - whether material and energy inputs or social inputs such as the provision of new

knowledge, technologies and institutional services are being supplied from outside the region. Second, we can ask whether the region is dependent upon non-renewable inputs, both energy and materials, from beyond its boundaries. Or is the region dependent on renewable resources beyond its boundaries which are not being managed in a sustainable manner? Third, we can become yet more sophisticated and ponder whether the region is in some sense culturally sustainable, whether it is contributing as much to the knowledge and institutional bases of other regions as it is culturally dependent upon others. Fourth, we can also question the extent to which the region is contributing to global climate change, forcing other regions to change their behavior, as well as whether it has options available to adapt to the climate change and surprises imposed upon it by others. From a global perspective, this fourth definition of sustainable development addresses the difficulties of going from hydrocarbon energy stocks to renewable energy sources while adapting to the complications of global climate change induced by the transitional net oxidation of hydrocarbons. Fifth, and last, we can inquire of the cultural stability of all regions in combination, are they evolving along mutually compatible paths, or will they destroy each other through war. These definitions become increasingly encompassing. All, however, address sustainability of changing interactions between people and their environment over time." - R. Norgaard. "Sustainable Development: A Co-Evolutionary View." (1988).

50. "In simple terms [sustainable development] argues for (1) development subject to a set of constraints which set resource harvest rates at levels no higher than managed or natural regeneration rates; and (2) use of the environment as a "waste sink" on the basis that waste disposal rates should not exceed rates of (natural and managed) assimilation by the counter part ecosystems..". David Pearce, "Optimal Prices for Sustainable Development." (1988).
51. "We take development to be a vector of desirable social objectives. Sustainable development is then a situation in which the development vector increases monotonically over time. We summarize the necessary conditions [for sustainable development] as "constancy of the natural capital stock." More strictly, the requirement as for non-negative changes in the stock of natural resources such as soil quality, ground and surface waters and their quality, land biomass, water biomass, and the waste

- assimilation capacity of the receiving environment.”- David Pearce, Edward Barbier, Anil Markandya. "Sustainable Development and Cost-Benefit Analysis." (1988)
52. "The government espouses the concept of sustainable economic development. Stable prosperity can be achieved throughout the world provided the environment is nurtured and safeguarded." Former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Speech to the Royal Society. Sept. 27, 1988.
53. "Economic growth means real GNP per capita is increasing over time. But observation of such a trend does not mean that growth is sustainable. Sustainable economic growth means that real GNP per capita is increasing over time and the increase is not threatened by "feedback" from either biophysical impacts (pollution, resource problems) or from social impacts (social disruption)." - David Pearce, Anil Markandya and Edward Barbier. *Blueprint for a Green Economy*. (1989).
54. "The phrase sustainable development has been criticized, for example, by O'Riordan (1985) as a contradiction in terms. If development is equated with economic growth, this criticism is indeed justified: Malthusian limits prevent sustained growth in a finite world... Ultimately, however, uncontrolled economic growth will cause the quality of the environment to deteriorate, economic development to decline and the standard of living to drop. Of course, the word development does not necessarily imply growth. It may convey the idea that the world, society or the biosphere is becoming "better" in some sense, perhaps producing more, or meeting more of the basic needs of the poor. The word therefore involves a value judgement. In principle, development could become sustainable through structural changes (economic, political, cultural or ecological) or a succession of technological break-throughs." R.E. Munn. "Towards Sustainable Development: an Environmental Perspective." (1989).
55. "Ecologically sustainable development is a condition in which society's use of renewable resources takes place without destruction of the resources or the environmental context which they require." Allan Solomon. *Towards Ecological Sustainability in Europe: Climate, Water Resources, Soils and Biota* (1990).

56. "Sustainable development - improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems." - IUCN, UNEP, and WWF. *Caring for the Earth*. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN, (1991)
57. "Sustainable development - an approach that will permit continuing improvements in the quality of life with a lower intensity of resource use, thereby leaving behind for future generations an undiminished or even enhanced stock of natural resources and other assets." Mohan Munasinghe and Ernst Lutz. "Environmental-Economic Evaluation of Projects and Policies for Sustainable Development." World Bank, Environment Department, Environment Working (1991).
58. "Maintenance of a steady state is one of the operational definitions of sustainable development. A steady state is a dynamic state in which changes tend to cancel each other out... Maintenance of a steady state in terms of resources, species and pollution would imply the following: o use of (conditionally) renewable resources should, within a specific area and time span, not exceed the formation of new stocks. Thus, for instance, yearly extraction of groundwater should not exceed the yearly addition to groundwater reserves coming from rain and surface water; o use of relatively rare nonrenewable resources, such as fossil carbon or rare metals, should be close to zero, unless future generations are compensated for current use by making available for future use an equivalent amount of renewable resources." - Hans Opschoor and Lucas Reijnders. "Indicators of Sustainable Development: An Overview." (1991).
59. "The concept combines two basic notions: economic development and ecological sustainability. Ecologically sustainable economic development can be thought of as the process of related changes of structure, organization and activity of an economic-ecological system, directed towards maximum welfare, which can be sustained by the resources to which that system has access." - Leon Braat. "The Predictive Meaning of Sustainability Indicators." (1991).
60. "Sustainable development: The amount of consumption that can be sustained indefinitely without degrading capital stocks, including natural capital stocks." - R. Costanza and Lisa Wainger "Ecological Economics: Mending the Earth" (1991).

61. "Sustainable development will involve a process of deep and profound change in the political, social, economic, institutional, and technological order, including redefinition of relations between developing and more developed countries." Maurice Strong (1992).
62. "Sustainable development may be defined as the development and management of natural resources to ensure or enhance the long-term productive capacity of the resource base and improve the long-term wealth and well-being derived from alternative resource use systems, with acceptable environmental impacts." - G. Schultink "Evaluation of Sustainable Development Alternatives (1992).
63. "Sustainable development means basing developmental and environmental policies on a comparison of costs and benefits and on careful economic analysis that will strengthen environmental protection and lead to rising and sustainable levels of welfare." – World Bank "World Development Report" (1992).
64. "Sustainability of development is concerned with (a) the rights of future generations to the services of natural and produced assets and (b) whether the formal and informal institutions which affect the transfer of assets to future generations are adequate to assure the quality of life in the long-run." - Richard Norgaard "Sustainability of the Economics of Assuring Assets for Future Generations" (1992).
65. "Sustainable development means that economic activities should only be extended as far as the level of maintenance of man-made and natural capital will permit. A narrower definition of sustainability excludes the substitution between natural and man-made assets and requires maintenance of the level of natural assets as well as man-made assets. A sustainable development seems to necessitate especially a sufficient water supply, a sufficient level of land quality (prevention of soil erosion), protection of existing ecosystems (e.g. the virgin tropical forests) and maintaining air and water quality (prevention of degradation by residuals). In these cases, the sustainability concept should not only imply constancy of the natural assets as a whole (with some possibility of substitution) but constancy of each type of natural asset (e.g. of the specific ecosystems)." -

United Nations Statistical Office. SNA Draft Handbook on Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (1992).

66. "A sustainable society is one that can persist over generations, one that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support." - Donella Meadows, et.al. "Beyond the Limits" (1992).
67. "Sustainable development is an intuitively powerful concept that, as commonly understood, provides a useful guide for development practitioners. It involves trade-offs between biological, economic, and social systems and is found in the interactive zone between these systems. There are a number of international factors that may be necessary, but insufficient, conditions for sustainable development on a national level, including peace, debt reduction, more propitious terms of trade and non-declining foreign aid. There are also several dilemmas related to the concept, including the role of growth as the unquestioned objective of economic policy, techniques for measuring sustainable development, the trade-offs between conflicting environmental goals and the limited time and distance horizons of elected politicians." - Johan Holmberg, ed. "Making Development Sustainable" (1992).
68. "I have used the word *perennial* rather than *sustainable* because I want to imply more than just holding the line, more than just preventing further degradation. Living systems are not static, they are continually unfolding into new forms. This means the consequences of our effects on the biosphere don't die away, they will continue to resonate into the indefinite future. If we are to thrive in perpetuity, we and our economic systems must consciously rejoin the jostling, creative melée that is the adventure of life on Earth." – Geoff Davies "Economia"
69. "Sustainable development means achieving a quality of life (or standard of living) that can be maintained for many generations because it is: 1. socially desirable, fulfilling people's cultural, material, and spiritual needs in equitable ways; 2. economically viable, paying for itself, with costs not exceeding income; 3. ecologically sustainable, maintaining the long-term viability of supporting ecosystems."- IUCN - World Conservation Union (1993).

70. "Sustainable living: such ways of life which strive for ideals of humanism and preservation of Nature, based on responsibilities towards present as well as future generations of Humankind and on respect for life and non-living parts of Nature. Sustainable society: a society following sustainable ways of life, establishing a dynamic harmony with Nature, based mostly on the use of renewable sources of energy and raw materials. Each civilization, society, nation, ethnic group could search for its own way to sustainable living, respecting its own cultural roots, economic conditions, and environmental situation and taking into account the collective wisdom of Humankind." Josef Vavrousek. "Salzburg Seminar on Environment and Diplomacy" (1994).
71. "Sustainability: A new way of life and approach to social and economic activities for all societies, rich and poor, which is compatible with the preservation of the environment" Saburo Kato (1994)
72. "Sustainable development means adjusting economic growth to remain within bounds set by natural replenishable systems, subject to the scope for human ingenuity and adaptation via careful husbanding of critical resources and technological advance, coupled to the redistribution of resources and power in a manner that guarantees adequate conditions of liveability for all present and future generations." - Tim O'Riordan and Jill Yaeger, "Global Environmental Change and Sustainable Development" (1994).
73. "The sustainable development concept includes 3 parts: i. the environment is an integral part of the economy and vice versa ii. intra-generational equity iii. inter-generational equity." Helmut Breitmeier "Sustainable Development: Criteria and Indicators" (1995).
74. "The Meaning of Sustainability: Biogeophysical Aspects." in Defining and Measuring Sustainability: The Biogeophysical Foundations. M. Munasinghe and W. Shearer, ed. Washington D.C. Distributed for the United Nations University by the World Bank. 1995. Biophysical sustainability means maintaining or improving the integrity of the life support system of Earth."- Keiichiro Fuwa.

75. "Biogeophysical sustainability is the maintenance and/or improvement of the integrity of the life-support system on Earth. Sustaining the biosphere with adequate provisions for maximizing future options includes providing for human economic and social improvement for current and future human generations within a framework of cultural diversity while: (a) making adequate provisions for the maintenance of biological diversity and (b) maintaining the biogeochemical integrity of the biosphere by conservation and proper use of its air, water and land resources. Achieving these goals requires planning and action at local, regional and global scales and specifying short- and long-term objectives that allow for the transition to sustainability." Mohan Munasinghe and Walter Shearer. "An Introduction to the Definition and Measurement of Biogeophysical Sustainability" (1995).
76. "Sustainability is whether (not the extent to which) the productive potential of a certain natural system will continue (for a long time, at least several decades) under a particular management practice (intensity and type of technical and social activities, e.g. inputs of energy, nutrients, genetic variety, harvesting procedures, and cyclic variations over time)." Richard Carpenter, "Limitations in Measuring Ecosystem Sustainability" (1995).
77. "A sustainable society implicitly connotes one that is based on a long-term vision in that it must foresee the consequences of its diverse activities to ensure that they do not break the cycles of renewal; it has to be a society of conservation and generational concern. It must avoid the adoption of mutually irreconcilable objectives. Equally, it must be a society of social justice because great disparities of wealth or privilege will breed destructive disharmony." - Kamal Hossain. "Evolving Principles of Sustainable Development and Good Governance." (1995).
78. "Sustainability is about 'thinking about forever'". Griffith University, UNEP
79. "The use of ecosystems and their resources in a manner that satisfies current needs while allowing them to persist in the long term." – Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation, American Museum of Natural History

80. "Being loyal to the principle of sustaining the Earth, its resources and its biodiversity for future generations" Robert Isaak "The Making of the Ecopreneur" (2002)
81. "Sustainability is more a symbol than a scientific concept. It's the focus for a new debate about the shape of the future, a signpost pointing to a general direction that we must take while the debate is engaged about the best path forward. Commitment to human and societal wellbeing is as important as ecological commitment to the planet. We must preserve a planet fit to live on and also create organisations that sustain the quality of our social life." Professor Dexter Dunphy, University of Technology, Sydney (2002).
82. "The term originally applied to natural resource situations, where the long term was the focus. Today, it applies to many disciplines, including economic development, environment, food production, energy, and lifestyle. Basically, sustainability refers to doing something with the long term in mind, (several hundred years is sufficient). Today's decisions are made with a consideration of sustaining our activities into the long term future." – Roger Caldwell, University of Arizona
83. "A sustainable city is organized so as to enable all its citizens to meet their own needs and to enhance their well-being without damaging the natural world or endangering the living conditions of other people, now or in the future. A truly sustainable business, which is defined as taking nothing from the earth, which is not renewable, and doing no harm to the biosphere, does not yet exist." Herbert Girardet "Creating Sustainable Cities" (1999)
84. "Sustainability means protecting our options. To protect our options we must place as much (or more) emphasis on maintaining and restoring ample, healthy 'stocks' and 'flows' of 'natural capital' as we do on protecting financial capital. Natural capital includes all of the environmental resources and ecological processes that sustain life on earth" Bob Doppelt "Leading Change toward Sustainability" (2003)
85. "Sustainable development comprises types of economic and social development that protect and enhance the natural environment and social

equity." - Dexter Dunphy et al "Sustainability – the Corporate Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (2001)

86. "Leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm life or the environment, make amends if you do."- Paul Hawken
87. "Sustainability is equity over time ... think of it as extending the Golden rule through time . Do unto future generations as you would have them do unto you." – Robert Gilman
88. "A sustainable society is one that lives within the self-perpetuating limits of its environment. That society is not a "no growth" society - it is, rather a society that recognizes the limits of growth and looks for alternative ways of growing." – James Coomer
89. "If you get right down to it, sustainability is really the study of the interconnectedness of all things." – Barbara Lither
90. "Sustainable design is the careful nesting of human purposes with the larger patterns and flows of the natural world..." - David Orr
91. "Achieving the ecological balance which allows economic prosperity and social equity to be achieved across generations." – David Schaller
92. "Development that provides real improvements in the quality of human life and at the same time conserves the vitality and diversity of the Earth." - Caring for the Earth
93. "Sustainability may be described as our responsibility to proceed in a way that will sustain life that will allow our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren to live comfortably in a friendly, clean, and healthy world... that people take responsibility for life in all its forms as well as respect human work and aspirations, respect individual rights and community responsibilities, recognize social, environmental, economic and political systems to be inter-dependent, weigh costs and benefits of decisions fully, including long-term costs and benefits to future generations, acknowledge

that resources are finite and that there are limits to growth, assume control of their destinies, recognize that our ability to see the needs of the future is limited, and any attempt to define sustainability should remain as open and flexible as possible." - Thomas Jefferson Sustainability Council

94. "Growth in harmony with our environment, preserving our resource base for our economic well-being, and planning for our children's future."  
Gary Filmon, Chair of the Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy
95. "Sustainability means resolving the conflict between two competing goals: the sustenance of human life and the integrity of nature. Why two competing goals? Living beyond our ecological means will lead to the destruction of humanity's only home. Having insufficient natural resources, and living in unsatisfactory and inequitable ways will cause destructive conflict and degrade our social fabric. In a sense, we putting a new spin on the old nature vs. nurture question. How can we get nurture without destroying its ultimate source, nature?" – Redefining Progress
96. "Sustainable development involves the simultaneous pursuit of economic prosperity, environmental quality and social equity. Companies aiming for sustainability need to perform not against a single, financial bottom line but against this triple bottom line." – World Business Council for Sustainable Development
97. "Development which ensures that the utilization of resources and the environment today does not damage prospects for their use by future generations." - Canada's National Task Force on Environment and Economy
98. "When we follow nature's rules, growth is good, the question before us is not growth versus no growth, It is: what would good growth look like? And this is a question of intent, of design. What if we grow health instead of sickness, home ownership instead of indigence, education instead of ignorance?" - William McDonough "The Next Industrial Revolution"
99. "Each generation is entitled to the interest on the natural capital, but the principal should be handed on unimpaired." - Canada's Commission on

## Conservation (in 1915)

100. “The ability of a community or society to develop a strategy of economic growth and development that continues to function indefinitely within the limits set by ecology and is beneficial to all stakeholders and the environment.” – Non-Profit Good Practice Guide
101. “Sustainable development- one of the slipperiest pieces of soap you are ever likely to find in the shower” – Peter Woodward , Shell Workshop
102. “Sustainable development is the lightest footprint possible on the biosphere and, most importantly, a consciousness that can sustain it.” - Ken Wilber (Author, Philosopher, President of The Integral Institute)
103. “Development without destruction” – Maurice Strong, Secretary General; of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit
104. “The ability to sustain the things that are essential to a meaningful and happy existence, now and forever, for ourselves and for those for whom we care.” – Stephen Forsyth
105. “Sustainability is acting, with good grace, like we plan to stay.”

Compiled by emrgnc based on contributions from:

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