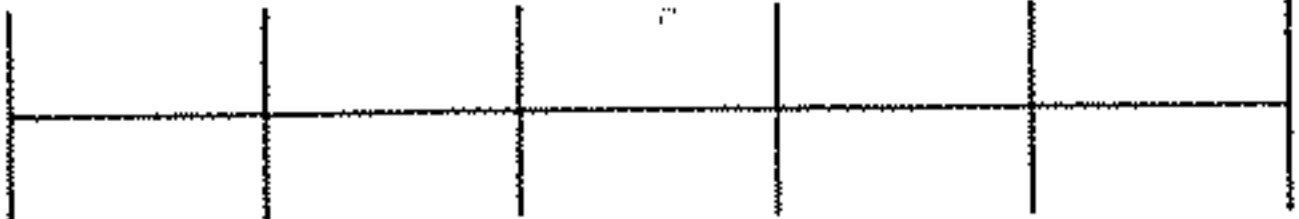


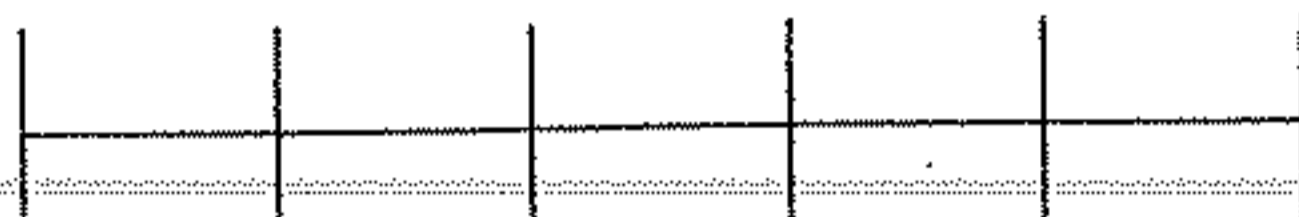


## **Resource 2. What is sustainable development?**

### **Instructions**

1. Place the statement cards (Resource 1) face down on the table.
2. Take it in turns to select a card and read it to the rest of the group. Refer to Resources 3 and 4. Discuss and answer the following questions for each statement:
  - a. Which of the aspects of sustainability does the author favour?
  - b. Which of the aspects of development does the author favour?
  - c. Are there any contradictory statements made by this author?
  - d. Who do you think made this statement? (For example, was it a politician, a member of an industrial group, a scientist, an economist or an environmentalist?)
3. Now look again at statements 1, 2, 4 and 8. Mark on the values continua (Resource 3) where you think each of these statements should be by putting the number of the statement at the appropriate point.
4. Join each of the numbers with a different coloured pen. Is there any common pattern? What can you say about the different values that are behind these statements?
5. What do you think sustainable development means? Try to write your own statement, including in it the main elements of sustainable development, and be prepared to discuss the importance of these elements.

### Resource 3. Values continua.

Supports the preservation of the natural environment		Encourages the exploitation of the natural environment for human needs
Supports zero economic growth		Supports high economic growth
Supports fairness between all species for the present generation (intragenerational equity)		Does not support intragenerational equity
Supports fairness for future generations (intergenerational equity)		Does not support intergenerational equity

### Resource 4. Aspects of sustainability.

Although a complete definition of sustainability would include all the following aspects, some definitions may only include one or two.

1. **Economic sustainability.** Economic sustainability means that development is economically efficient and that the benefits of such development are distributed between generations. Economic efficiency means that processes and projects undertaken must give the greatest output per unit of input.
2. **Social sustainability.** Social sustainability requires that development does not cause social conflict. In practice this means that development should increase people's control over their lives – that all social groups should have the opportunity to participate in decision making.
3. **Cultural sustainability.** Cultural sustainability requires that any development should take into account the values of the people affected by it. In addition, the range of cultural groups should be maintained and encouraged, and the value of their heritage and traditions recognised.
4. **Ecological sustainability.** Ecological sustainability means that development should take into account the maintenance of ecological processes, biological diversity and biological resources. To achieve this, our society needs to recognise that the survival and well-being of other species are also important.

### Resource 5. Aspects of development.

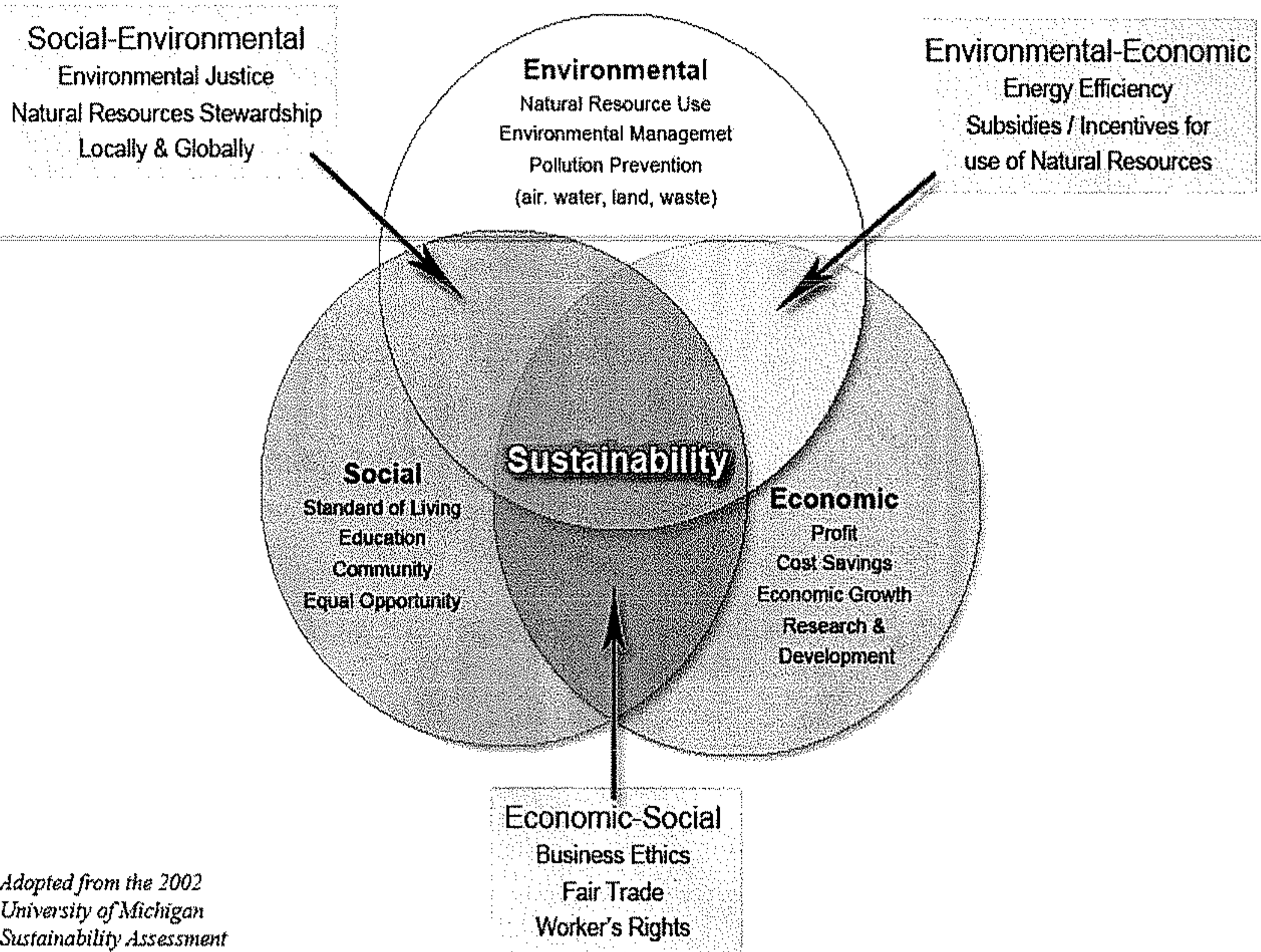
The word "development" means a process of change. But what is it we are trying to change? Here are some ideas:

- ☒ Development is helping others to help themselves.
- ☒ Development is the process by which all humanity moves to live with dignity and a just share in the world's resources.
- ☒ Development is progress towards a higher standard of living for every person in a region or nation.
- ☒ Development is a form of imperialism whereby the rich nations exploit the poor.
- ☒ Development is the attempt to ensure that, as nations change and increase their production per head, there is a better distribution of wealth, so that every person has his/her basic needs met and as many as possible of his/her wants satisfied.
- ☒ Development is the growing capacity of a society to incorporate change.
- ☒ Development is sharing the world's wealth more equitably. It is sharing our world.
- ☒ Development is economic growth measured in terms of the improvement in national product.
- ☒ Development is the satisfaction of mass needs by packaged solutions.

### Resource 6. Sources of sustainable development definitions.

1. Taken from the Department of the Environment's pamphlet (1994) *Sustainable Development* (p. 1).
2. Attributed to Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute.
3. From J. Holmberg *et al.* (1991) *Defending the Future: A Guide to Sustainable Development* (p. 6).
4. From the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) in *Our Common Future* (p. 8).
5. From IUCN/UNEP/WWF's (1991) *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living* (p. 10).
6. Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration, part of UNCED's (1992) Agenda 21.
7. Taken from the preamble to the UK Government's (1996) *Indicators of Sustainable Development for the United Kingdom*.
8. Made by Michael Redclift (1987) in *Sustainable Development: Exploring the Contradictions* (p. 199).
9. Made by David Pearce (1993) in *Blueprint 3: Measuring Sustainable Development*, (p. 7).
10. From the World Bank's (1994) *Making Development Sustainable* (p. 1).

# The Three Spheres of Sustainability



*Adopted from the 2002  
University of Michigan  
Sustainability Assessment*

1. Sustainable development can be briefly described as working for economic growth without cheating on our children.

2. Sustainability means the capacity to satisfy current needs without jeopardising the prospects of future generations... [This entails] protecting the ozone layer, stabilising climate, conserving soils, stabilising forests and population.

4. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs... and extending to all the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a better life.

5. Sustainable development...  
mean[s]: improving the quality of  
human life while living within the  
carrying capacity of supporting  
ecosystems.

6. Human beings are at the centre  
of concerns for sustainable  
development. They are entitled  
to a healthy and productive life  
in harmony with nature.

7. Sustainable development means  
reconciling two basic aspirations of  
society:

- achieving economic development  
to secure rising standards of  
living both now and for future  
generations;
- protecting and enhancing the  
environment now and for the  
future.

8. Sustainable development means more than seeking a compromise between the natural environment and the pursuit of economic growth. It means a definition of development which recognises that the limits of sustainability have structural as well as natural origins.

9. Sustainable development is economic development that lasts.

10. The concept of sustainable development implies balancing environmental protection with the generation of increased opportunities for employment and improved livelihoods.