

# Chapter 1: National Goals Toward Sustainable Development

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*This common set of goals emerged from the Council's vision. These goals express in concrete terms the elements of sustainability. Alongside the goals are suggested indicators that can be used to help measure progress toward achieving them.*

THE FOLLOWING GOALS express the shared aspirations of the President's Council on Sustainable Development. They are truly interdependent and flow from the Council's understanding that it is essential to seek economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social equity together. The achievement of any one goal is not enough to ensure that future generations will have at least the same opportunities to live and prosper that this generation enjoys: all are needed.

## **GOAL 1: HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ensure that every person enjoys the benefits of clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment at home, at work, and at play.

## **GOAL 2: ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

Sustain a healthy U.S. economy that grows sufficiently to create meaningful jobs, reduce poverty, and provide the opportunity for a high quality of life for all in an increasingly competitive world.

## **GOAL 3: EQUITY**

Ensure that all Americans are afforded justice and have the opportunity to achieve economic, environmental, and social well-being.

## **GOAL 4: CONSERVATION OF NATURE**

Use, conserve, protect, and restore natural resources - land, air, water, and biodiversity - in ways that help ensure long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits for ourselves and future generations.

## **GOAL 5: STEWARDSHIP**

Create a widely held ethic of stewardship that strongly encourages individuals, institutions, and corporations to take full responsibility for the economic, environmental, and social consequences of their actions.

**GOAL 6: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

Encourage people to work together to create healthy communities where natural and historic resources are preserved, jobs are available, sprawl is contained, neighborhoods are secure, education is lifelong, transportation and health care are accessible, and all citizens have opportunities to improve the quality of their lives.

**GOAL 7: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Create full opportunity for citizens, businesses, and communities to participate in and influence the natural resource, environmental, and economic decisions that affect them.

**GOAL 8: POPULATION**

Move toward stabilization of U.S. population.

**GOAL 9: INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Take a leadership role in the development and implementation of global sustainable development policies, standards of conduct, and trade and foreign policies that further the achievement of sustainability.

**GOAL 10: EDUCATION**

Ensure that all Americans have equal access to education and lifelong learning opportunities that will prepare them for meaningful work, a high quality of life, and an understanding of the concepts involved in sustainable development.

Accompanying the goals are indicators of progress, yardsticks to measure progress toward each goal. These indicators of progress suggest what information to look at to determine the progress that the country is making toward achieving the goals. They are not intended to be mandates for specific actions or policies, and they may change over time as the country moves toward these goals and learns more about the science and policy options underlying them. Graphics illustrating a few possible indicators are included. In some cases, the suggested indicators are concepts that are not now easily measured and will require more work before they can be used as true yardsticks.



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**GOAL 1**

**HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

*Ensure that every person enjoys the*

**INDICATORS OF PROGRESS**

Clean air, clean water, and reduced exposure to toxics are basic indicators. Beyond that, other environmental exposures (such as to lead and tobacco smoke) can also contribute directly and indirectly to health problems.

benefits of clean air, clean water, and a healthy environment at home, at work, and at play.

Where causal links can be identified, additional indicators should be used.

FIGURE 1



SOURCE: The National Public Water System Supervision Program, *FY 1994 National Compliance Report*.

**CLEAN AIR**

Decreased number of people living in areas that fail to meet air quality standards.

**DRINKING WATER**

Decreased number of people whose drinking water fails to meet national safe drinking water standards.

**TOXIC EXPOSURES**

Reduced releases that contribute to human exposure to toxic materials.

**DISEASES AND MORTALITY**

Decrease in diseases and deaths from environmental exposures, including occupationally related illnesses.

**GOAL 2**

**ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

Sustain a healthy U.S. economy that grows sufficiently to create meaningful jobs, reduce poverty, and provide the opportunity for a high quality of life for all in an increasingly competitive world.

FIGURE 2



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994).

**INDICATORS OF PROGRESS**

The traditional measures of economic activity include gross domestic product (GDP), net domestic product (NDP), and the unemployment rate. These measures, however, do not take into account negative environmental impacts of production and consumption or gauge the incidence of poverty. The Council agreed that additional yardsticks are needed for adequately gauging economic progress in the broadest sense.

**ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE**

Increases in per capita GDP and NDP.

**EMPLOYMENT**

Increases in the number, wage level, and quality of jobs (as measured, for example, by the percentage of jobs at or below minimum wage).

**POVERTY**

Decreased number of people living below the poverty line.

**SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT RATES**

Higher per capita savings and investment rates.

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL**

## ACCOUNTING

Development and use of new economic measures or satellite accounts that reflect resource depletion and environmental costs.

## PRODUCTIVITY

Increased per capita production per hour worked.

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## GOAL 3

### EQUITY

*Ensure that all Americans are afforded justice and have the opportunity to achieve economic, environmental, and social well-being.*



SOURCE: World Resources Institute, Resources and Environmental Information Program, Washington, D.C., 1995.

## INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

The Council believes that equity is such an important goal that it has worked to weave this priority into each element of this report. However, measuring fairness and equality of opportunity throughout a population is complex. It requires measuring differences between rich and poor in a number of ways and involves yardsticks not yet available. Such measures should be developed to show whether the nation is progressing toward greater equity by reducing disparities in risks and access to benefits.

## INCOME TRENDS

Increase in the average income of the bottom 20 percent compared with that of the top 20 percent of the U.S. population.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EQUITY

Development of measures of any disproportionate environmental burdens (such as exposure to air, water, and toxic pollution) borne by different economic and social groups.

## SOCIAL EQUITY

Development of measures of access to critical services (such as education, health care, and community services), and opportunities to participate in decisionmaking by different economic and social groups, such as the percentage of these populations attending college.

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## GOAL 4

### CONSERVATION OF NATURE

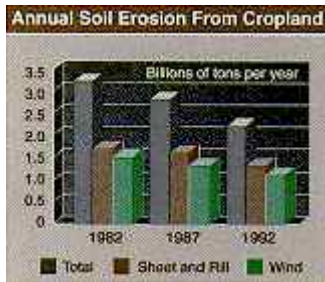
*Use, conserve, protect, and restore natural resources - land, air, water,*

## INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

Measuring the health and extent of natural systems is difficult because they are complex; vary over time and space; and have effects that can be local, regional, and/or global. Most of the following indicators focus on local and regional systems, reflecting the Council's work on

*and biodiversity - in ways that help ensure long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits for ourselves and future generations.*

FIGURE 4



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, *Summary Report, 1992 -- National Resources Inventory* (Washington, D.C., 1995).

watersheds and communities. Additional indicators are needed to reflect how well the nation is contributing to the protection of natural systems worldwide.

## ECOSYSTEMS

Increase in the health of ecosystems, including forests, grasslands, wetlands, surface waters, and coastal lands:

- Decreased soil loss and associated productivity loss due to erosion and chemical or biological changes in natural systems and other lands such as agricultural lands.
- Increased number of acres of healthy wetlands.
- Increased percentage of forests managed to reach full maturity and diversity.
- Development of indicators to measure water bodies with healthy biological communities.

## HABITAT LOSS

Development of measures of threats to habitat loss and the extent of habitat conversion, such as the rate of wetlands loss.

## THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Decreased number of threatened and endangered species.

## NUTRIENTS AND TOXICS

Decreased releases that contribute to the exposure of natural systems to toxics and excess nutrients.

## EXOTIC SPECIES

Reduced ecological impacts caused by the introduction and spread of exotic species.

## GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Reduced emissions of greenhouse gases and of compounds that damage the ozone layer.

## GOAL 5

### STEWARDSHIP

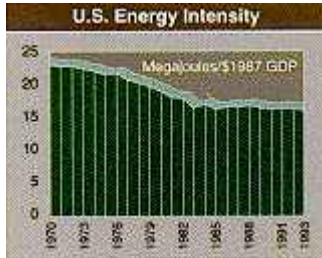
*Create a widely held ethic of stewardship that strongly encourages individuals, institutions, and corporations to take full*

## INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

Stewardship is an ethic or value; quantitative measures of it are difficult and need further work. What can be readily measured is the use of natural resources within the United States - efficient use and wise management are key to ensuring that such resources will be available for future generations.

*responsibility for the economic, environmental, and social consequences of their actions.*

FIGURE 5



SOURCE: World Resources Institute, Resources and Environmental Information Program, Washington, D.C., 1995.

**MATERIALS CONSUMPTION**

Increased efficiency of materials use, such as materials intensity measured per capita or per unit of output.

**WASTE REDUCTION**

Increased source reduction, reuse, recovery, and recycling,

**ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

Reduced energy intensity (energy per unit output).

**RENEWABLE RESOURCE USE**

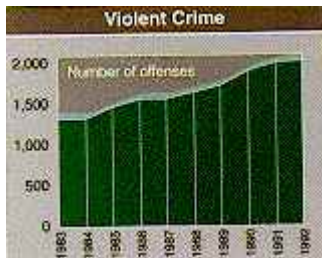
Decreased rate of harvest or use compared to rate of regeneration in fisheries, forests, soil, and groundwater.

**GOAL 6**

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

*Encourage people to work together to create healthy communities where natural and historic resources are preserved, jobs are available, sprawl is contained, neighborhoods are secure, education is lifelong, transportation and health care are accessible, and all citizens have opportunities to improve the quality of their lives.*

FIGURE 6



SOURCE: Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994.

**INDICATORS OF PROGRESS**

Local values and priorities shape the characteristics that contribute to strong and stable communities. However, thriving communities across the nation share many common traits as do threatened communities. Indicators need to allow for diversity among communities while recognizing national priorities.

**COMMUNITY ECONOMIC VIABILITY**

Increased local per capita income and employment in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

**SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS**

Decrease in violent crime rates.

**PUBLIC PARKS**

Increase in urban green space, park space, and recreational areas.

**INVESTMENT IN FUTURE GENERATIONS**

Increase in the amount of public and private resources dedicated to children, including health care, maternal care, childhood development, and education and training.

**TRANSPORTATION PATTERNS**

Decrease in measures of traffic congestion; increase in

the use of public and alternative transportation systems.

**COMMUNITY ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Increase in library use and the percentage of schools and libraries with access to the Internet and National Information Infrastructure.

**SHELTER**

Decreased number of homeless people by community.

**METROPOLITAN INCOME PATTERNS**

Reduced disparity in per capita income between urban areas and their suburbs.

**INFANT MORTALITY**

Decrease in infant mortality rates by economic and social group.

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**GOAL 7**

**CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

*Create full opportunity for citizens, businesses, and communities to participate in and influence the natural resource, environmental, and economic decisions that affect them.*

**INDICATORS OF PROGRESS**

Democratic societies rely on an engaged population of diverse individuals and institutions. Additional measures are needed to track participation and gauge the effectiveness of policies that strengthen cooperative decisionmaking while still allowing for individual leadership and creativity. Effective yardsticks may come from studying successful efforts to build community values, public trust, and government responsiveness.

FIGURE 7

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Increase in the percentage of eligible voters who cast ballots in national, state, and local elections.

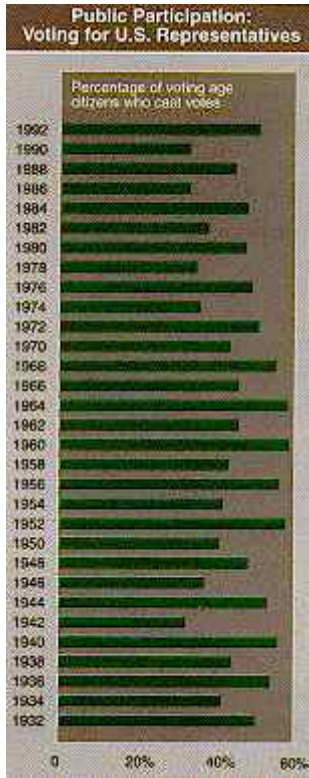
New indicators must be developed to measure:

**SOCIAL CAPITAL**

Increase in citizen engagement and public trust, such as the willingness of people in a community to cooperate for their mutual benefit.

**CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

Increase in community participation in such civic activities as professional and service organizations, parent-teacher associations, sporting leagues, and volunteer work.



SOURCE: Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994.

## COLLABORATIONS

Increased use of successful civic collaborations such as public-private partnerships, community-based planning and goal-setting projects, and consensus-building efforts.

## GOAL 8

### POPULATION

*Move toward stabilization of U.S. population.*

FIGURE 8



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce, *Statistical Abstract of the*

## INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

Together with the more traditional population measurements, such as estimates of growth, trends and measures of the social and economic status of women within society are also important. Evidence has shown that as the health and status of women improve, population pressures become more manageable.

### POPULATION GROWTH

Reduced rate of population growth in the United States and the world.

### STATUS OF WOMEN

Increased educational opportunity for women; increased income equality for equivalent work.

### UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES

Decreased number of unintended pregnancies in the United States.



*United States 1993* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994).

## **TEEN PREGNANCIES**

Decreased number of teenage pregnancies in the United States.

## **IMMIGRATION**

Decreased number of illegal immigrants.

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## **GOAL 9**

### **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

*Take a leadership role in the development and implementation of global sustainable development policies, standards of conduct, and trade and foreign policies, that further the achievement of sustainability.*



NOTE: Official development assistance is the net amount of dispersed grants and concessional loans given by member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

SOURCE: *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*.

## **INDICATORS OF PROGRESS**

The actions taken by the United States have a significant effect on the world's environment, economy, and cultures. This nation has a tradition of global leadership and responsibility. It is important to continue this tradition. While indicators of global leadership apply to all sectors, the following ones focus on the role of the federal government.

### **INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

Increased level of U.S. international assistance for sustainable development, including official development assistance (federal money dedicated to international aid for developing nations).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE**

Increase in the U.S. contribution to the Global Environmental Facility and other environmentally targeted development aid.

### **ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS**

Development and use of new measures for assessing progress toward sustainable development in countries receiving U.S. assistance.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY EXPORTS**

Increased U.S. exports or transfers of cost-effective and environmentally sound technologies to developing countries.

### **RESEARCH LEADERSHIP**

Increased levels of U.S. research on global environmental problems.

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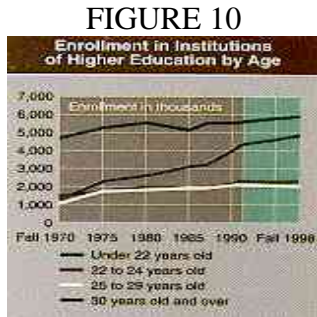
## **GOAL 10**

### **EDUCATION**

## **INDICATORS OF PROGRESS**

Education for sustainable development should be lifelong through integration into formal and nonformal education

*Ensure that all Americans have equal access to education and lifelong learning opportunities that will prepare them for meaningful work, a high quality of life, and an understanding of the concepts involved in sustainable development.*



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, *Digest of Education Statistics 1995* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993).

settings, including teacher education, continuing education, curriculum development, and worker training.

### **INFORMATION ACCESS**

Increased number of communities with infrastructure in place that allows easy access to government information, public and private research, and community right-to-know documents.

### **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Increased number of curricula, materials, and training opportunities that teach the principles of sustainable development.

### **NATIONAL STANDARDS**

Increased number of school systems that have adopted K-12 voluntary standards for learning about sustainable development similar to the standards developed under the National Goals 2000 initiative.

### **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Increased number of school systems and communities with programs for lifelong learning through both formal and nonformal learning institutions.

### **NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT**

Improved skill performance of U.S. students as measured by standardized achievement tests.

### **GRADUATION RATES**

Increased high school graduation rates and number of students going on to college or vocational training.