

## THE POLITICS OF SUSTAINABILITY

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### ABSTRACT

Sustainable development is the most beneficial concept to come out of the environmental movement in years. Unfortunately 'sustainable' has always been a euphemism for 'popular with environmentalists'. This degradation of language is a pity and has in many ways prevented the sustainability debate from reaching anywhere beyond the hopeless bickering between the bearded sandal-wearers and the utilitarian pinstripes.

Although the most widely accepted definition 'development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', is too vague when it comes to formulating programmes of actions. However, this does not make the concept of sustainable development meaningless nor does it make immediate action superfluous. It just makes it a political battleground between consumers, governments and businesses in the face of growing resource pressure from developed and emerging markets, declining natural reserves, climate change concerns and other issues such as rising food prices.

This paper explores contemporary issues such as energy, agriculture and food in the light of the ongoing sustainability debate and how these issues play out between the developed and developing countries.