

Sustainable Development Law and Multidisciplinary Sustainable Development-oriented Efforts towards the Wellbeing of Humans and Overall Resources of Nature

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Abstract

Humanity and society at large are in the age of sustainable development (SD). SD is the engineering force of society in the 21st Century. Individuals, other units and sectors of society are eager to achieve SD. It is an unavoidable paradigm that underpins most, if not all, actions of humans, units of society, and society at large. Increasing ongoing efforts and activities of individuals, other units and sectors, particularly those of governments of sovereign states, demonstrate that there is an all-round global quest for SD. Thus, public sector governments, international institutions, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society groups within domestic jurisdictions of sovereign states are committed to SD, so as to promote and actualise its achievement. Also, all professions and disciplines of the knowledge industry are committed to SD, albeit realising that to achieve it requires multidisciplinary, multifaceted, multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional, versatile and all-encompassing approaches. The aim of this study is to approach SD from the background of law and examine it as a multidisciplinary subject-matter, so as to sensitise countries and peoples of the world to promote and actualise the wellbeing of the human race and society at large. It emphasises continuous improvement of the wellbeing of the human race, other life forms and natural resources, as well as vibrant harmonious co-existence between all nations and peoples of the globe on our Planet Earth.

Keywords: Sustainable Development (SD); Sustainable Development Law (SD Law); United Nations (UN); Wellbeing; Environment; Development; Conferences; Summits; Humans (Humanity/Humankind); Natural Resources; Conservation; Ecosystem; Planet Earth; Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs); Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Natural Resources.

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1. Introduction

Humanity and society at large on the Planet Earth are in the age of sustainable development (SD). SD has become the propelling force of society in the 21st Century. Individuals, other units and sectors of society are eager to achieve SD. It is an unavoidable paradigm that underpins most, if not all, actions of humans, units of society, and society at large, ranging from the actions of individuals, families, communities, the private sector (business), sectors of domestic economies as well as sectors of the global economy and sovereign states. Increasing ongoing efforts and activities of individuals, other units and sectors, particularly those of governments of sovereign states (countries), demonstrate that there is an all-encompassing global quest for SD.¹

In the course of ongoing global efforts, pioneered and being ably superintended over by the UN, to promote the achievement of SD around the world, the conducts of people, organisations, countries and the international community associated with SD are being regulated.² For example, we may in this regard, refer to UN Agenda 21, which is one of the outcome documents of the UN Conference on Environment and

¹ J. C. Coomer (ed), *Quest for a Sustainable Society* (Elsevier Inc. 1981).

² UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, *Achieving Sustainable Development and Promoting Development Cooperation: Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council* (UN 2008); Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN, *The Future Is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development: Global Sustainable Development Report 2019* (UN 2019); UN SD Goals, 'Sustainable Development Agenda' <<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>>; homepage of the Earth Charter Initiative (ECI) <<http://earthcharter.org/>>; all Accessed 27 April, 2020.

Development (UNCED), 1992, that is designed to regulate the intertwined and interwoven relationship between the environment and development. As a global plan of action designed to promote and actualise SD around the globe, the UN Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan that outlines necessary actions to be taken globally, nationally and locally, by organisations of the UN system, particularly governments and major groups within the system, in every area of endeavour of the humankind that impacts on the environment in the course of development, so as to promote and achieve SD.¹ SD primarily regulates the conducts of human beings and society in sovereign states² and thus imposes responsibilities on governments of these states (public sector governments) to achieve SD in the interest of their people and states. In effect, public sectors around the globe, international institutions, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sectors of the global economy, as well as sectors of domestic economies and civil society groups (including NGOs within sovereign states are committed to SD. As such, they align themselves with the strategies designed to promote and achieve SD. Also, all professions and disciplines of the knowledge industry are committed to SD, albeit realising its multidisciplinary, multi-dimensional and all-encompassing nature. So, every discipline of the knowledge industry as well as all professionals and non-professionals realise that to achieve SD requires multidisciplinary, multifaceted, multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional, versatile and all-encompassing approaches.³

The aim of this study is to approach SD from the background of law and to examine it, from the framework of socio-legal methodology. The study would examine SD as a multidisciplinary subject-matter, which is all-embracing and cutting-edge, so as to sensitise countries and peoples of the globe on the need for harmonious co-existence between the human race and other forms of life, including natural resources on Planet Earth,⁴ in the course of ongoing collective efforts being championed by the UN, to achieve SD. It makes a case for continuous improvement of the wellbeing of the human race, other life forms and natural resources, as well as vibrant harmonious co-existence between all nations and peoples of the globe on our Planet Earth.

2. SD and Sustainability in Historical Perspective and Ongoing Global Efforts to Achieve SD

We consider that it is pertinent and sequential to divide this sub-heading into two, namely ‘SD and Sustainability in Historical Perspective’ and ‘Ongoing Global Efforts to Promote the Achievement of SD’.

2.1. SD and Sustainability in Historical Perspective

The term ‘sustainable development’ is associated with ‘sustainability’.⁵ Simply, sustainability may be considered as the ‘ability to continue or be continued for a long time’.⁶ This means the ability to continue an activity in the long term or the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level, so as to ensure wellbeing and to

¹ UN SD Goals Knowledge Platform’, ‘United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit’ <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/unced>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

² V. Barral, ‘Sustainable Development in International Law: Nature and Operation of an Evolutive Legal Norm’ [2012] 23 (2) *European Journal of International Law*, 377–400.

³ A. Pawlowski, *Sustainable Development as a Civilizational Revolution: A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Challenges of the 21st Century* (Taylor and Francis Group 2011).

⁴ Principle 1, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992; D. Attenborough, *Life On Earth: A Natural History* (William Collins & Sons 1979); G. Park, *Introducing Natural Resources* (Dunedin Academic Press 2016); T. Flannery, *Here on Earth: A Natural History of the Planet* (Atlantic Monthly Press 2010); S. Emmott, *Ten Billion* (Vintage Books 2013); S. Emmott, ‘Humans: the real threat to life on Earth’ <<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/jun/30/stephen-emmott-ten-billion>>; R. McKie, ‘Interview: Stephen Emmott: overpopulation is at the root of all the planet’s troubles’ <<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/jul/15/overpopulation-root-planet-problems-emmott>>; M. Le Page (The Daily Newsletter [6 May, 2019]), ‘Destruction of nature is as big a threat to humanity as climate change’ <<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2201697-destruction-of-nature-is-as-big-a-threat-to-humanity-as-climate-change/>> all Accessed 27 April, 2020; N. Rich, *Losing Earth: The Decade We Could Have Stopped Climate Change* (Picador [Pan Macmillan] 2019).

⁵ Homepage of the ECI (n2); F. Ekarth (Research Unit Sustainability and Climate Policy), ‘Theory of Sustainability’ <<http://www.sustainability-justice-climate.eu/en/nachhaltigkeit.html>>; W. Jenkins, Sustainability Theory’ <https://www.berkshirepublishing.com/assets_news/sustainability/Spirit_SustainabilityTheory.pdf>; University of Alberta, Office of Sustainability, ‘What is Sustainability?’ <<https://www.mcgill.ca/sustainability/files/sustainability/what-is-sustainability.pdf>> all Accessed 27 April, 2020; J. Blewitt, *Understanding Sustainable Development* (Earthscan 2008).

⁶ Oxford Learner’s Dictionary of Academic English ‘sustainability’ <<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/sustainability?q=sustainability>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

avoid depletion. For example, in relation to humanity, sustainability may be considered to mean maintenance, in order to ensure or guarantee human wellbeing. In relation to natural resources, sustainability may be considered in the context of conservation of natural resources, so as to maintain an ecological balance.¹ Doing so, may, for instance, involve humans using energy and natural resources as well as their products in a way that does not harm the environment, and its supporting ecological base, ecosystems and eco-system services on the Planet Earth.²

The movement towards sustainability, namely the age-old concern and activities of how to achieve a more just, equitable, harmonious, sustainable and peaceful world on the platform and strength of the wellbeing of humanity and other resources of nature, to enable Planet Earth thrive, dates back to time immemorial. In other words, while the concept of sustainability is relatively new, the movement towards sustainability has a rich history, which dates back to the beginning of human civilisation. By the end of the 20th Century, many of the ideas and activities about sustainability, centred for instance on effective environmental protection and conservation, which are designed to promote the wellbeing of humans and overall resources of nature, had come together in the worldwide call for ‘sustainable development.’³

2.2. Ongoing Global Efforts to Promote the Achievement of SD

The UN is a platform and sound basis of considering ongoing global efforts and trends to promote the achievement of SD. So far, the UN has pioneered, is ably leading and superintending over conferences, summits and the progressively ongoing processes of these conferences and summits, which are designed to sensitise the entire global community, particularly countries and peoples of the world, to promote and achieve SD. These UN conferences and summits began with the Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), held at Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972; Meeting of the UN member-states in Nairobi, Kenya, from 10 – 18 May 1982; the UNCED, which is informally known as the ‘Earth Summit’ as well as the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992; the World Summit on SD (WSSD), held at Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002 and the Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD [Rio+20]), held again in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012. Also, there are continuing follow-up measures of these conferences and summits, which are taking place in a progressive and advancing manner in the UN system.⁴ For instance, in the UN system, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) is the voice of the UN system on the environment. UNEP is the leading global environmental authority, which sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of SD in the UN, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. Its mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing and enabling nations and peoples around the globe to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.⁵ UNEP helps to generate public awareness, interest and understanding on the most pressing environmental issues facing our Planet Earth. It collaborates with goodwill ambassadors, patrons and advocates across a number of campaigns and initiatives, to inspire peoples around the world to engage and to act as environmental custodians.⁶ It acts as a catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote the wise use and SD of the global environment.⁷ Also, the Division for SD Goals (DSDGs) in the UN

¹ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union [IUCN]) *et al*, World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development (IUCN 1980).

² *Ibid*; Principle 3, Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, 1972; Principle 1, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992; S. R. Kellert, *Birthingright: People and Nature in the Modern World* (Yale University Press 2012); J. Radkau, *Nature and Power: A Global History of the Environment* (Cambridge University Press 2008); J. V. Walther, *Earth’s Natural Resources* (Jones and Bartlett Publishers 2013); A. Gilpin, *Dictionary of Environmental Law* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2000), 92–93; Cambridge Dictionary, ‘Sustainability’ <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sustainability>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

³ University of Alberta, Office of Sustainability (n7).

⁴ E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya, ‘Sustainable Development: A Soft Law Concept Transforming SD-Oriented Initiatives of the UN System into Hard Law Instruments in UN Member-states and Promoting Partnerships around the Globe’ [2020] 94 *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, 41, 48 and 50; A. C. Kallhauge *et al* (eds), *Global Challenges: Furthering the Multilateral Process for Sustainable Development* (Greenleaf Publishing 2005); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya, *Participation in Petroleum Development: Towards Sustainable Community Development in the Niger Delta* (Centre for Energy, Petroleum & Mineral Law & Policy [CEPMLP]/Dundee University Press [DUP] 2010), 49–51, 70–71, 75 and 317.

⁵ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), ‘Home: About UN Environment Programme’ <<https://www.unenvironment.org/about-un-environment>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁶ UNEP, ‘UNEP VOICES: Global Ambassadors’ <<https://www.unenvironment.org/people/unenvironment-voices>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁷ European Union, ‘Welcome to UN Environment Programme - Environment for Development: About the

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), acts as Secretariat for the UN SD Goals (UNSDGs) in the UN system.

Accordingly, UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) organises, through intergovernmental bodies, follow-up measures of major UN conferences and summits. The Council, which is a platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, coordinates member-states of the UN to translate internationally agreed goals into actual programmes in the member-states. ECOSOC brings people and issues together to promote collective action for a sustainable world.¹

Regardless of the fact that the UN is a platform and sound basis of considering ongoing global efforts and trends towards achieving SD, the history of sustainability and SD may be traced to Robert Prescott-Allen of the World Conservation Strategy (WCS) and the Expert Group for SD indicators (SDIs) of the UN Commission on SD. Prescott-Allen was a staff-writer for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN [the World Conservation Union]) and principal author of the WCS.² The WCS is a landmark publication of 1980 that helped to define the concept of SD and thereby shaped global outlook on conservation and SD. Prescott-Allen introduced the term 'sustainable development' and promoted the preparation of National Conservation Strategies (NCSs), in the process of which he linked the wellbeing of countries to the wellbeing of peoples and a healthy environment in the countries. Prescott-Allen's approach and analysis demonstrate that there is a nexus between the wellbeing of countries and the wellbeing of peoples, and by extension, the wellbeing of the environment (including the wellbeing of ecology, ecosystems and ecosystem services) within countries.³

Sustainability and SD eventually came into prominence as outcomes of the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) by the UN, by virtue of the UNGA Resolution 38/161 of 19 December, 1983.⁴ This Commission, chaired by a former Norwegian Prime Minister and former Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, was set-up in 1983 (after the UNCHE of 1972) as an independent body, to make available a report on environment and the global *problématique* to the year 2000 and beyond, including proposed strategies for SD. Thus, this Commission, which adopted the name WCED, was to address increasing global concerns about the accelerating deterioration of the human environment and natural resources and the consequences of such deterioration on socio-economic development and all-embracing prosperity associated with the growth and advancement of countries and peoples around the globe.⁵ While setting-up the Commission in a remarkable and an outstanding manner, the UN recognised that environmental problems were global in nature, and that it is in the common interest of all nations and peoples to establish policies and to embark on actions for SD.⁶ The brief of the Commission was thus to re-examine the critical environment and development problems on Planet Earth and to formulate realistic proposals to solve such problems, in order to ensure sustainable human progress through development, without endangering the environment and bankrupting the resources of future generations. The Commission was to investigate the numerous concerns of previous decades, namely, that human activities were having serious negative consequences on the planet and that predominant patterns of growth and development are unsustainable and thus should not be continued unrestrained.⁷ The fact that patterns of growth and development of human societies should be restrained, may be blamed on unsustainable patterns of production and consumption⁸ and

United Nations Environment Programme' <<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/unep/wiki/about-united-nations-environment-programme>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

¹ Homepage of ECOSOC <<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/>> UN ECOSOC, 'About ECOSOC: ECOSOC at a Glance' <<https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/about/>>; UN ECOSOC, 'ECOSOC: About Us' <<https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/about-us>> all Accessed 27 April, 2020; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (2008 [n2]).

² The International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union [IUCN]) *et al* (n9).

³ R. Prescott-Allen, *The Wellbeing of Nations: A Country-by-Country Index of Quality of Life and the Environment* (Island Press 2001); J. Carew-Reid *et al*, *Strategies for National Sustainable Development: A Handbook for their Planning and Implementation* (IUCN 1994/Earthscan 2009); R. Allen, *How to Save the World: Strategy for World Conservation* (Corgi Children's 1982).

⁴ UN, SD Goals Knowledge Platform, 'Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development - Our Common Future' <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/wced>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁵ The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), *Our Common Future* (Oxford University Press 1987), ix; T. Jackson, *Prosperity without Growth?: The Transition to a Sustainable Economy* (Sustainable Development Commission 2009); T. Jackson, *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet* (Earthscan 2011).

⁶ WCED (n20), ix-66.

⁷ *Ibid*; UK SD Commission, 'History of SD' <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/history_sd.html> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁸ Principle 8, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992, which provides that *to achieve*

their deleterious consequences on the environment, human wellbeing and SD at large.¹

So, the WCED came into being in the UN system as a result of ongoing global efforts to achieve SD, which are dynamically being championed, spearheaded and midwifed by the UN, in the course of various UN conferences and summits that are designed to promote the achievement of SD. As indicated above, these UN conferences and summits began with the UNCHE, 1972 and progressed to the UNCSD (Rio+20), 2012 and the ongoing follow-up measures, which are taking place in a progressive and advancing manner in the UN system. Quite remarkably and captivatingly so, the UNCHE, marked the first globalised step to initiate action plans and strategies towards a more sustainable pattern of development, as the conference examined and focused on the clear and irrefutable facts and evidences that development and the environment, which were hitherto considered as separate issues, could be managed in a mutually beneficial way. It was at the UNCHE that the concept of SD was first formerly recognised by the entire global community.²

Over and again, scholars have been stating that on the basis of the initial of the cities in which the UN conferences and summits discussed here were convened, they may be called the UN 'SRJR' conferences and summits, while the process of promoting the achievement of SD, pursuant to these conferences and summits and their ongoing outcomes may be known as the UN 'SRJR Process'.³

In the course of the UN SRJR Process, the main recommendation of the WCED, expressly stated in the Commission's report entitled *Our Common Future* (the future of the entire global community on Planet Earth), which was published in 1987, is that the solution to the compelling demand for environmental protection in the course of economic development should be a new approach, namely SD. In other words, the WCED, which treats the environment as our abode (where we live) and development as what we do in attempting to improve our lot within our abode, considers SD as the solution to increasing global environmental degradation, devastation and despoliation, which are still being occasioned in the course of economic development. The Commission thus serves *Our Common Future* as a notice to the entire community of countries and peoples of the globe that time has come for a marriage between economic development and efficient environmental protection, through conservation, preservation of ecology, ecosystems and ecosystem services, as a means to promote, support and sustain the carrying capacity of the Earth, towards the wellbeing of the present and future humanity. The WCED then proposes that governments and their citizens should take responsibility to promote SD, by changing their policies, processes and practices, which were occasioning the degradation, devastation and despoliation of the environment as well as threatening the security and very survival of the human family, other forms of nature and natural resources on Planet Earth.⁴

sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, states should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies; Chapter 4, UN Agenda 21, captioned 'Changing Consumption Patterns', which deals with unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and how to develop national policies and strategies to encourage changes in unsustainable consumption patterns, among other related issues as poverty and environmental degradation; Goal 12, UN SDGs, captioned 'Responsible Consumption and Production', which is aimed at ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns around the globe; UNEP, *ABC of SCP Clarifying Concepts on Sustainable Consumption and Production: Towards a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production* (UNEP 2010); UNEP, *Resource Efficiency and Sustainable Consumption and Production: Accelerating the Transition to Sustainable Societies: United Nations Environment Programme: Annual Report 2015* (UNEP 2015); E. Briggs (ed), *Sustainable Consumption and Production: A Handbook for Policymakers* (UNEP 2015); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya, *Petroleum Development & the Environment in Rivers State Nigeria: Fallouts of the UNEP Report on Ogoniland, Environmental Regulatory Standards & Sustainable Development Laws & Practices* (LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing 2018), 6, 7, 16, 58–66, and 71–72.

¹ UNEP, *Healthy Environment, Healthy People* (UNEP 2016).

² E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2020 [n12]), 41.

³ E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2018 [23]), 43; *Cf* A. C. Kallhauge *et al* (eds) (n12), 16–30; E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya, 'Environmental Assessment Law towards Sustainable Development in Nigeria and the New Partnership for Africa's Development Action Plan for the Environment Initiative' [2016] *Environmental & Planning Law Review* (ELPR), 13 (1–2), 2016, 1294; E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2020 [n12]), 41, 48 and 50.

⁴ WCED (n20), back cover review and ix–23 and 66; P. Bartelmus, *Sustaining Prosperity, Nature and Wellbeing: What Do the Indicators Tell Us?* (Routledge 2018); D. A. Munro, *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living* (Union Internationale pour la Conservation de la Nature et de ses Ressources, Switzerland 1994); IUCN *et al*, *Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for Sustainable Living* (Earthscan 2009); African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (Algiers Convention [signed in 1968 in Algiers])

<https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7782-treaty-0029_-_revised_african_convention_on_the_conservation_of_nature_and_natural_resources_e.pdf> Revised African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (adopted 7 March, 2017, date of last signature,

Our Common Future gives a classic definition of SD as the development which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹ On its part, the Earth Charter Initiative (ECI – which espouses the values and principles for building a more just, sustainable and peaceful world), highlights that SD expands our vision towards greater ethical principles and practices.² This Charter is an international declaration of fundamental values and principles, having its constituent global movement of organisations and individuals that embrace the declaration for building vision, attitude, knowledge, wisdom, skills and values needed to achieve a more just, equitable, harmonious, sustainable and peaceful global society.³

By and large, the case for SD proposed and recommended by the WCED implies that sovereign states (countries), government, business, individuals, civil society organisations and all other sectors of society are required to put the environment first, development would last by being sustainable. Essentially, the WCED recommends that in the final analysis, SD must rest on political will, and thereby putting onus primarily on achieving SD on sovereign states (countries and nations) of the world.⁴

From the foregoing we may assert that the gradual but progressively advancing efforts of the UN on the environment towards SD, from the UNCHE, 1972, up to the UNCSD, 2012 and the forward-looking and dynamic ongoing processes of these conferences and summits constitute a spotlight on the history of sustainability and SD, in the context of ongoing global efforts to promote the achievement of SD. The immediate outcomes of these UN conferences and summits and their ongoing processes towards achieving SD, underscore and vitalise the global trend towards SD in the overall interest of humanity, the environment and other forms of nature on Planet Earth. In this regard, nature is, of course, considered as the collective phenomena of the physical world, which include all plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the Planet Earth, as distinct from humans and thus not created or made by humans.⁵

3. From Ongoing Global Efforts to Promote the Achievement of SD to the Evolving Law of SD

So far, SD law appears to be the most dynamic and influential aspect, branch or discipline of law.⁶ SD law has two broad divisions, namely international (supra-national) SD law and national (domestic) SD law.⁷

The increasingly evolving international SD law and national SD law mainly point towards the UN SRJR Process; that is the above-stated UN conferences and summits and their continuing follow-up measures aimed at promoting and achieving SD around the world. It is therefore important to outline the main outcomes of these UN conferences and summits. The major outcome of the UNCHE, 1972, which constitutes a common outlook for common principles to inspire and guide the peoples and countries of the world to preserve and enhance the human environment, is the Stockholm Declaration. A decade after the UNCHE, the assembly of the world community took place in Nairobi, Kenya, 1982, and made a Declaration known as the UN Nairobi Declaration of that year. Thereafter, the UNCED, 1992, produced certain major outcome documents. These include the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, often called ‘the Rio Declaration’, which is a series of principles defining the rights and responsibilities of UN member-states (sovereign states) on issues of the environment and development.⁸ The Rio Declaration is one of the three major agreements designed to guide future approaches of the global community towards SD and one of the five outcome documents of the Rio de

4 February, 2019) <https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7782-treaty-0029_-_revised_african_convention_on_the_conservation_of_nature_and_natural_resources_e.pdf> all Accessed 27 April, 2020; IUCN Environmental Law Programme, *An Introduction to the African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources: IUCN Environmental Law and Policy Paper No. 56* (The World Conservation Union [IUCN] 2004).

¹ WCED (n20), 8, 40 and 43.

² Homepage of the ECI (n2); The Earth Charter, ‘Earth Charter Education’ <<https://earthcharter.org>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

³ *Ibid*; P. B. Corcoran (ed), *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable Development* (KIT Publishers 2006); UN Association of Australia (UNAA), *The Earth Charter* (UNAA 2017).

⁴ WCED, 9.

⁵ Oxford Learner’s Dictionary of Academic English ‘nature’ <<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/academic/nature?q=nature>> Accessed 27 April, 2020; J. V. Walther (n10).

⁶ M. Decleris, *The Law of Sustainable Development: General Principles: A Report Produced for the European Commission* (European Commission 2001), 60.

⁷ A. Ross, *Sustainable Development Law in the UK: From Rhetoric to Reality* (Earthscan 2012).

⁸ UN Audiovisual Library of International Law, ‘Rio Declaration on Environment and Development’ <https://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/dunche/rio_ph_e.pdf> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

Janeiro Earth Summit (UNCED). Other major agreements of UNCED are the *UN Agenda 21* and the *Statement of Forest Principles*.¹

The UN Agenda 21, designed to regulate the intertwined and interwoven relationship of the environment to development, is an approach to SD. It is a global plan of action designed to promote and actualise SD around the globe. It is an extensive blueprint and very exhaustive plan outlining necessary actions towards the achievement of SD worldwide, ranging from local to national and then international levels.² It is a comprehensive plan of the UN system, which outlines necessary actions to be taken globally, nationally and locally, by organisations of the UN system, particularly governments and major groups thereof, in every area of endeavour of the humankind that impacts on the environment in the course of development, so as to promote and achieve SD. Agenda 21 may also be described as a master plan, road-map and 'greenprint' for global partnership, which aims at a high quality environment and a healthy economy for all peoples around the globe. It focuses on critical issues confronting the entire global community, such as continuing damage to ecosystems, worsening poverty, hunger and ill health, increasing global population and illiteracy. It is comprised of 40 Chapters, which identify each challenge and propose simple and realistic solutions towards SD. From the UN Agenda 21, member-states of the UN were to design and develop, and did, in fact, design and develop their respective Agenda 21, as their distinct and separate instruments towards SD.³ Thus, there is, for instance, *Nigeria's National Agenda 21*,⁴ which was developed in 1999 from the UN Agenda 21.

The rest of the outcome documents and regulatory instruments of UNCED, 1992, are the UN *Framework Convention on Climate Change* and the *Convention on Biological Diversity*.⁵ Also, the main outcome document of the WSSD, 2002, is the Johannesburg Declaration on SD.⁶ Finally, the major outcome document of the UNCSD, 2012, is entitled 'Focused Political Outcome Document ... The Future We Want – (Our Common Vision)'.⁷ Whereas, these main outcome documents of the progressively ongoing UN conferences and summits on the environment and development towards SD constitute the bedrock of international (supra-national) SD law, the induction of these outcome documents and other initiatives of the SRJR Process into domestic jurisdictions of member-states of the UN gives rise to national (domestic) SD laws of various member-states of the UN and sovereign states of the world.

Consequently, we recall that at the level of the UN, UNEP, which was established in 1972, after the UNCHE, with its headquarters in Nairobi Kenya, is the voice of the UN system on the environment. This programme provides leadership to member-states of the UN on environmental issues, particularly pressing environmental issues facing our Planet Earth and it sensitises such states to promote the wise use and SD of the global environment. We may also recall that at the UN level, follow-up measures are organised to sensitise and coordinate member-states of the UN to domesticate internationally agreed goals, such as SD initiatives, by implementing them as concrete programmes in the domestic jurisdictions. Through intergovernmental bodies, ECOSOC organises follow-up measures of major UN conferences and summits.⁸ Besides, there are such initiatives of the UN system as the UN Global Compact. This Compact, launched by the UN Secretary-General in July 2000, is a fall-out of ongoing economic globalisation, premised on the efforts of the UN to achieve SD. On the platform of the UN Global Compact, the UN unites business to advance corporate responsibility towards greater public good, business sustainability and SD, based on the Compact's ten principles in the areas of human

¹ UN, SD Goals Knowledge Platform, 'United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit' (n3); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2020 [n12]), 41.

² UN SDGs Knowledge Platform, Division of SDGs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), 'Agenda 21' <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/outcomedocuments/agenda21>> and <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>> both Accessed 7 February, 2020.

³ UN SDGs Knowledge Platform, Division of SDGs, DESA, 'United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Rio de Janeiro Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992 Agenda 21' <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁴ Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), *Nigeria's National Agenda 21* (FEPA 1999).

⁵ UN SD Goals Knowledge Platform, 'United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Earth Summit' (n3).

⁶ Europa, 'The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development' <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/wssd/documents/wssd_pol_declaration.pdf> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁷ UN SD Goals Knowledge Platform, 'Future We Want - Outcome Document' <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html>>; UNGA, 'Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2012 66/288. The Future We Want [dated 11 September 2012]' <https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁸ UN, 'ECOSOC: About Us: ECOSOC at a Glance' (n16); UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination (2008 [n2]).

rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.¹ Particularly, in developing countries, characterised by weak environmental laws and regulatory mechanisms as well as lack of public sector government social responsibility (GSR) towards human wellbeing, the above-stated key outcomes of various conferences and summits of the UN and other initiatives of the UN system on SD are increasingly being incorporated and adopted, even as direct state practices, into domestic jurisdictions, as emergent and increasingly evolving SD law of these countries. Along with the outcomes and continuing follow-up processes and measures of the UN conferences and summits towards achieving SD, there are other soft law mechanisms emanating from the international realm into the domestic arena of sovereign states *vis-à-vis* domestic jurisdictions of UN member-states, where these soft law mechanisms are practised.² These include norms, guidelines and standards of various sectors of the global economy, which are governing these sectors of the global economy, especially in the ongoing era of economic globalisation.³ They include those of the global extractive industry sector,⁴ global minerals industrial sector⁵ and the global petroleum sector,⁶ which are aimed at regulating operations of these respective sectors, so as to enlist their contributions to SD. In essence, there are measures being taken by various sectors of the global economy to make their sectors support, promote and contribute to SD.

From the foregoing, it may be highlighted that sources of international SD law and the increasingly evolving national (domestic) SD law are traceable to the ongoing UN conferences and summits and their outcomes as well as the initiatives of various sectors of the global economy to make their operations contribute to SD. These initiatives are aimed at sensitising and engineering countries and peoples all over the global community to achieve SD. The initiatives include various plans, policies, programmes as well as guidelines, standards and other regulatory measures, which are designed to spur and propel countries, including their governments and people, and the entire global community to achieve SD.⁷ They are immensely contributing to the growth and advancement of international SD law as well as SD laws of various member-states of the UN, particularly domestic SD law of developing countries. Besides, it is essential to mention that the contributions of international and national nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), especially activist groups, towards SD are

¹ Homepage of the UN Global Compact <<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/>>; UN Global Compact, 'Who are We: Business as a force for good' <<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020; E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya, 'The UN Global Compact as a Soft Law Business Regulatory Mechanism Advancing Corporate Responsibility towards Business Sustainability and Sustainable Development Worldwide' [2020] 94 *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, 27–39; C. Fussler *et al* (eds), *Raising the Bar: Creating Value with the UN Global Compact* (Routledge 2017); O. F. Williams (ed), *Sustainable Development: The UN Millennium Development Goals, the UN Global Compact, and the Common Good* (University of Notre Dame Press 2014); J. T. Lawrence and P. W. Beamish (eds), *Globally Responsible Leadership: Managing According to the UN Global Compact* (SAGE Publications 2013); A. Rasche and G. Kell (ed), *The United Nations Global Compact: Achievements, Trends and Challenges* (Cambridge University Press 2010); R. H. Cooper and J. V. Kohler (eds), *Responsibility to Protect: The Global Moral Compact for the 21st Century* (Palgrave Macmillan 2009); UN, *United Nations Global Compact Inspirational Guide: Human Rights, Labour, Environment, Anti-corruption, Partnerships for Development* (UN 2008); J. B. Skjærseth *et al*, 'Soft Law, Hard Law, and Effective Implementation of International Environmental Norms' [2006] 6 (3) *Global Environmental Politics*, 104–120; O. F. Williams, 'The UN Global Compact: The Challenge and the Promise' [2004] 14 (4) *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 755–774.

² P. J. Cooper and C. M. Vargas, *Implementing Sustainable Development: From Global Policy to Local Action* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers 2004); V. Barral (n4); S. Baker *et al* (eds), *The Politics of Sustainable Development: Theory, Policy, and Practice within the European Union* (Routledge 1997).

³ *Ibid*; P. King and S. King, *International Economics, Globalization, and Policy* (Mcgraw Hill Higher Education 2008); D. Rodrik, *Has Globalization Gone Too Far?* (Institute for International Economics 1997).

⁴ International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), *Breaking New Ground: Mining, Minerals, and Sustainable Development: The Report of the MMSD Project* (Earthscan 2002); World Bank Group, 'Striking a Better Balance – The World Bank Group and Extractive Industries: The Final Report of the Extractive Industries Review, World Bank Group Management Response' <<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/961241468781797388/pdf/300010GLB.pdf>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁵ Homepage of the Global Mining Guidelines Group <<https://gmggroup.org/>>; homepage of the Global Mining Institute <<https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/industries/mining.html>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁶ International Quality and Productivity Center (IQPC), 'Introduction to Oil and Gas Industry: Learn about the three key sectors in oil and gas, the current state of the industry and future outlook' <<https://www.oilandgasiq.com/strategy-management-and-information/articles/oil-gas-industry-an-introduction>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁷ P. Bartelmus (n27).

also significant to the development of SD law.¹

Remarkably, international SD law is essentially being derived from the international arena, mainly from global sources, which are sources of the UN, up to regional and bilateral sources of foreign relations between and among sovereign states and other subjects of international law, as well as from key sectors of the global economy, along with their regional and sub-regional sectors.²

For purposes of greater details, it may be mentioned that within international SD law, there could be regional, sub-regional and bilateral SD systems.³ For instance, regional SD systems should be governed by the legal and regulatory frameworks of regional groupings. Accordingly, sub-regional SD systems should be governed by sub-regional legal and regulatory frameworks of sub-regional groupings, while bilateral SD systems should be governed in accordance with the dictates of bilateral legal and regulatory frameworks of the sovereign states that constituted bilateral relations such as bilateral treaties. Also, regarding regional SD systems, there could be SD-oriented human rights treaties and other human rights legal and regulatory instruments of the following human rights regional groups: the European Union (European human rights region); Organisation of American States ([OAS]: Inter-American human rights region); Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN: Southeast Asian human rights region); and the Arab League (League of Arab States: Arab States' human rights region).⁴ In Africa, there could also be SD-oriented economic sub-regional treaties and other SD-oriented economic legal and regulatory instruments of the following sub-regional groups:⁵ Southern African Development Community (SADC within the Southern African economic sub-region); Eastern African Community (EAC within the Eastern African economic sub-region); Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS: within the Central African economic sub-region); Arab Maghreb Union (AMU: within the Arab countries of the Maghreb in the North African economic sub-region); and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS: within the West African economic sub-region). For example, ECOWAS was formed by the ECOWAS treaty of 1975,⁶ in Lagos Nigeria, and it has the ECOWAS Court of Justice.⁷

Certainly, national SD law is increasingly and dynamically evolving, and influentially so, from international SD law.⁸ This is more so, on issues of the environment and development, particularly in emerging markets (such as economies in transition) and developing markets (developing countries), due all the more to the

¹ UN Agenda 21, Chapter 27, captioned 'Strengthening the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations: Partners for Sustainable Development'; UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), 'Non-Governmental Organizations' <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/ngos.html>>; International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), 'The Rise and Role of NGOs in Sustainable Development' <<https://www.iisd.org/business/ngo/roles.aspx>>; M. Blosser, 'The Role of NGOs in Sustainability' <<https://study.com/academy/lesson/the-role-of-ngos-in-sustainability.html>>; R. Pacheco-Vega, 'NGOs and Sustainable Development' [2010] International Encyclopedia of Civil Society, 24–36 <https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-0-387-93996-4_566> all Accessed 27 April, 2020; D. Lewis and N. Kanji, *Non-Governmental Organizations and Development* (Routledge 2009); R. A. Dibia (ed), *Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Lexington Books 2007).

² M. Thomas and M. Rhisiart (eds), *Sustainable Regions: Making Sustainable Development Work in Regional Economies* (Aureus Publishing 2004).

³ S. Baker *et al* (eds) (n45); M. Decleris (n33), 60–125.

⁴ C. M. Cerna (ed), *Regional Human Rights Systems: Volume V: 5 (The Library of Essays on International Human Rights)* (Routledge 2016); D. Shelton, *Regional Protection of Human Rights* (Oxford University Press 2010).

⁵ A. O. Olutayo and A. I. Adeniran (eds), *Regional Economic Communities: Exploring the Process of Socio-economic Integration in Africa* (Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa [CODESRIA] 2015); Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin, *Law and Sustainable Development in Africa* (Grosvenor House Publishing 2012); M. Thomas and M. Rhisiart (eds), *Sustainable Regions: Making Sustainable Development Work in Regional Economies* (Aureus Publishing 2004).

⁶ Multilateral Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Concluded at Lagos on 28th May, 1975 (No. 14843), Registered by Nigeria on 28th June, 1976, which was revised on 24th July, 1993, in Cotonou (the largest city and economic centre of Benin (The Republic of Benin (formerly Dahomey) <<https://www.ecowas.int/ecowas-law/treaties/>>; Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Revised Treaty (ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria 2010) <<https://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Revised-treaty.pdf>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁷ Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): Community Court of Justice, which was created pursuant to the provisions of Articles 6 and 15 of the Revised Treaty of the ECOWAS <<https://www.ecowas.int/institutions/community-court-of-justice/>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁸ M. Decleris (n33), 60.

ongoing trend of economic globalisation.¹ In the process of ongoing economic globalisation, norms, guidelines and standards, among other environment and development regulatory measures are increasingly being introduced from global and other international arenas into the domestic jurisdictions of sovereign states,² particularly developing countries. International guidelines, standards and other SD-oriented regulatory measures are being introduced from the international arena to the domestic jurisdictions of countries, especially developing countries, where they are implemented or practised.³ This is more so, in developing countries, which are characterised by bad governance and hence lack of government social responsibility (GSR), weak environmental governance and equally weak CSR systems, which fall below international benchmarked guidelines, standards and other regulatory measures. In such countries, various international benchmarked standards, guidelines and other international regulatory measures are increasingly influencing the emergence, growth and development of domestic SD law. They are as well increasingly engineering the improvement of environmental protection, boosting good environmental governance (GEG), which includes improved quality of environmental assessment and practice,⁴ advancing corporate responsibility (corporate social responsibility [CSR]), enhancing host governments' social responsibility (GSR), towards business sustainability and overall SD. These are fostering and enhancing the betterment of the welfare of citizens, generic human wellbeing, environmentally-sound, ecologically-centred and socio-economically equitable growth, prosperity and SD in developing countries like Nigeria. In such cases, national SD law and practice are being influenced by sources and instruments of international SD law, which are soft law mechanisms that are being specifically incorporated and adopted into the legal system of these countries as well as those that are being out rightly adopted from the international arena into the domestic jurisdictions of these countries by virtue of state practice. By virtue of state practice, which subject-matter may be broader in scope and thus include the doctrine of specific incorporation and adoption into a country's legal system, a developing country may out rightly accommodate necessary and compelling international SD-oriented modes of conduct such as measures, mechanisms or strategies aimed at promoting SD in its domestic jurisdiction.⁵ Aspects of international benchmarked soft law regulatory measures, mechanisms or strategies that may prevail in developing countries by virtue of the policy and politics of state practice⁶ may include those of UN Global compact, IFC's environmental and social (E&S) performance standards, as key aspects of the IFC's sustainability framework, as well as those of the global energy and major natural resources extractive industrial operations (EIOs), which are being adopted into practice through Private Sector Partnerships (PSPs) and Public-Private Sector Partnerships (PPSPs). For instance, with regard to the IFC's sustainability framework and this framework's component S&E performance standards, these are being adopted by the private sector, in the form of PSPs, and the public sector (host governments) in the form of PPSPs, in the course of the IFC's projects and corporate financing schemes in developing countries. In the process, international benchmarked soft law mechanisms are generating PSPs, PPSPs and Economic Development Agreements (EDAs)⁷ as well as multi-stakeholders SD-oriented Good Neighbour Agreements (GNAs) and other forms of SD-oriented Impact-benefit agreements with EIOs in resources-rich communities,⁸ in domestic jurisdictions of

¹ S. M. Rugumamu, *Globalization Demystified: Africa's Possible Development Futures* (Dar es Salaam University Press 2005).

² J. Auby, *Globalisation, Law and the State* (Hart Publishing 2017); L. Yueh (ed), *The Law and Economics of Globalisation: New Challenges for a World in Flux* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2009); H. Chang, *Globalisation, Economic Development and the Role of the State* (Zed Books and Third World Network 2003).

³ P. J. Cooper and C. M. Vargas (n45); V. Barral (n4); S. Baker *et al* (eds) (n45).

⁴ B. Carroll and T. Turpin, *Environmental Impact Assessment Handbook: A Practical Guide to Planners, Developers and Communities* (Thomas Telford 2009) 151–152; C. Wood and M. Dejedour, 'Strategic Environmental Assessment: EA of Policies, Plans and Programmes' [1992] 10 (1) *Impact Assessment Bulletin*, 4, 10, 11, 14 and 15.

⁵ E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2020 [n23]), 6, 29, 43, 46, 64, 66, 71 and 74; *c/f* P. De Man, 'State Practice, Domestic Legislation and the Interpretation of Fundamental Principles of International Space Law' [2017] 42 *Space Policy*, 92–102.

⁶ N. Gill *et al*, 'The Politics of Policy Practices' [2017] 65 (2) *The Sociological Review*, 3–19; R. Zohlnhöfer, 'How Politics Matter When Policies Change: Understanding Policy Change as a Political Problem' [2009] 11 (1) *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 97–115; J. L. MacDonnell and S. F. Bates (eds), *Natural Resources Policy and Law: Trends and Directions* (Island Press 1993); J. K. Gamman, *Overcoming Obstacles in Environmental Policymaking: Creating Partnership through Mediation* (State University of New York Press 1994).

⁷ N. S. Okogbule, *Legal Status of Economic Development Agreements* (Davis Printing & Packaging Co. 2004); S. Chihata, *A Textbook of International Economic Law* (Cambridge University Press 2014) 50.

⁸ A. J. Wright (The Canadian Community Economic Development Network [CCEDNet]), 'Impact and Benefit Agreements: The Role of Negotiated Agreements in the Creation of Collaborative Planning in Resource

developing countries, which are increasingly influencing the development and advancement of SD law in these countries, particularly resources-rich developing countries, which are suffering from the resource curse.¹

4. SD: Its Aspects, Concepts, Principles, Goals and Indicators

While discussing SD, it is important to consider its aspects, concepts, principles, goals and indicators.²

4.1. Aspects of SD

The aspects of SD are essential parts of its features. The component aspects of SD are mainly its economic, social, environment and governance pillars, as well as its ecological and cultural spheres. Among these, the governance aspect of SD, namely good public sector governance (good political leadership [GG]), is very crucial, key, compelling and most inevitable. GG and SD are considered to be indivisible. Given that SD cannot be achieved without GG. So, GG may be described as the foremost, greatest and most significant enabler of SD. Consequently, while highlighting the relationship of GG with SD, the Seventh UN Secretary-General (1 January, 1997 – 31 December, 2006), Kofi Annan, proclaimed on July 28, 1997, at the UN 'International Conference on Governance for Sustainable Growth and Equity', which took place in New York, from 28–30 July, 1997, that 'good governance and sustainable development are indivisible'.³

The foregoing proclamation of Kofi Annan underscores the key significance of GG to development, prosperity, peace and SD in society. In fact, considering the preconditions, particularly the mandatory requirements, towards more just, equitable, harmonious, sustainable and peaceful global society, the role of GG in member-states of the UN cannot be overemphasised.⁴

The characteristic features (elements or indicators) of GG include legitimacy, accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency, rule of law, public access to information, participation and access to justice, regulatory burden, strategic vision (in the exercise of authority), consensus orientation, equity and inclusiveness (involving partnership between governance and its followership), responsiveness, clarity, coherence, predictability, control of corruption, democracy, solidarity, discretion, decentralisation, determinacy, symbolic validation, adherence, authorisation and tenure.⁵ Thus, as against bad government or poor governance,

Development' <<https://ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/toolbox/impact-and-benefit-agreements-role-negotiated-agreements>>; Natural Resources Canada, 'Whitehorse Mining Initiative' <<http://www.nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/policy/government-canada/8698>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020; E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2010 [n12]), 11, 13 and 328; J. L. MacDonnell and S. F. Bates (eds), *Natural Resources Policy and Law: Trends and Directions* (Island Press 1993).

¹ R. M. Auty, *Sustaining Development in Mineral Economies: The Resource Curse Thesis* (Routledge 1993); R. M. Auty and H. Furlonge, *The Rent Curse: Natural Resources, Policy Choice, and Economic Development* (Oxford University Press 2019); P. J. Stevens, 'The Resource Curse Revisited Appendix: A Literature Review' [2015] *The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 1–42; F. van der Ploeg, 'Natural Resources: Curse Or Blessing?' [2011] 49 (2) *Journal of Economic Literature*, 366–420; A. Perry, 'Brief History: The Resource Curse' <<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1997460,00.html>>; J. Chen, 'The Resource Curse' <<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/r/resource-curse.asp>>; The Natural Resource Governance Institute, 'The Resource Curse: The Political and Economic Challenges of Natural Resource Wealth' <https://resourcegovernance.org/sites/default/files/nrgi_Resource-Curse.pdf>; S. M. Patrick, 'Why Natural Resources Are a Curse on Developing Countries and How to Fix It' <<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/04/why-natural-resources-are-a-curse-on-developing-countries-and-how-to-fix-it/256508/>> all Accessed 27 April, 2020; J. Rexler, 'Beyond the Oil Curse: Shell, State Power, and Environmental Regulation in the Niger Delta' [2010] 12 (1) *Stanford Journal of International Relations*, 26–31.

² E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2020 [n12]), 42–45.

³ UN, 'Meetings Coverage and Press Releases: Good Governance Essential to Development, Prosperity, Peace Secretary-General Tells International Conference, Press Release SG/SM/6291/DEV/2166' <<https://www.un.org/press/en/1997/19970728.SGSM6291.html>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁴ E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya, *Governance Towards Sustainable Development in Nigeria: The Role of Strategic Assessment of Decisions & Actions* (Centre for Energy, Petroleum & Mineral Law & Policy [CEPMLP]/Dundee University Press [DUP] 2013), 40–49.

⁵ *Ibid*; K. Ginther et al (eds), *Sustainable Development and Good Governance* (Martinus Nijhoff 1995); T. G. Weiss, 'Governance, Good Governance and Global Governance: Conceptual and Actual Challenges' [2000] 21(5), *Third World Quarterly*, 795; D. Kaufmann et al, 'The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues' [2010] *Global Economy and Development*, *Brookings Institution*, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/09_wgi_kaufmann.pdf> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

GG invests in people towards overall public good and overall interest and wellbeing of society. GG puts people at the centre of development, given that the growth and advancement of societies mean the growth and/or development of people in those societies.¹

Besides, to explain further how crucial, compelling and indispensable GG is in the global march towards SD, in relation to CSR and development, it is said that no matter how well designed or intended and notwithstanding how effectively implemented, the responsibility of business (the private sector) is not an alternative to GSR embedded in GG. Otherwise put, no matter how well initiated and how successfully implemented, CSR is not an alternative to GSR ingrained in good, transparent, accountable and responsible governance (GG). Development and, by and large, SD, are precisely, simply and squarely aspects of the traditional duties and responsibilities of government, particularly GG, as GG and SD are indivisible. Development (including the right to development and to secure adequate standard of living of citizens and residents in a country) and SD are domestic issues, which are principally associated with GSR, embedded in GG, the social contract of governance and state responsibility (government responsibilities) in domestic affairs (SRDAs).² There is therefore an urgent and inevitable need for countries (sovereign states) to have GG, so as to pilot their affairs towards SD as well as a sustainable future. This is specifically so regarding developing countries and least developed countries (less economically developed countries).

4.2. Concepts of SD

It may be recalled here that WCED indicates that two key concepts are inherent in SD, namely the concept of 'needs', and the idea of 'limitations'.³ The concept of 'needs' particularly refers to the essential and priority 'needs of the world's poor', while the idea of 'limitations' is 'imposed by the state of technology and social organisation' in relation to the ability of the environment to meet the needs of present and future generations of humans.⁴ These two concepts underscore the need for 'conservation', which is the simple, precise and clear message of the WCS.⁵

4.3. Principles of SD

SD has certain principles. Based on their peculiar approaches, countries, institutions, sectors and civil society groups, such as NGOs, around the globe are increasingly designing their respective SD principles, which appear distinct but are nevertheless inter-related or basically the same from the background of their key precepts (ethical baselines).

4.3.1. Principles of SD: Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN)

The defunct Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN) outlined and enumerated seven of SD Principles in Nigeria's *National Policy on the Environment*.⁶ These are the precautionary principle, pollution prevention pays principle (3p+), polluter pays principle (PoPP), user pays principle (UPP), principle of intra-generational equity, principle of inter-generational equity, and the principle of public participation. One, the Precautionary Principle, which is expressed in Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992 (as well as evident in Principle 17 of this Declaration on EIA), stipulates that where there are threats of significant, serious or irreversible damage, the lack of full scientific knowledge shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost effective means to prevent environmental degradation, despoliation and devastation. Two, the Pollution Prevention Pays Principle (3P+) encourages industry to invest positively to prevent environmental pollution. Three, the Polluter Pays Principle (PPP, stated in Principle 16 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992), provides that the polluter should pay the costs of preventing, controlling and remedying pollution. Four, the User Pays Principle (UPP) stipulates

¹ E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2013 [n70]), 47.

² J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Wordsworth Classics of World Literature) (Wordsworth Editions 1998); J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right* (Aziloth Books 2011); M. T. Ladan, *Materials and Cases on Public International Law* (Ahmadu Bello University Press 2007), 48–50; D. Harris, *Cases and Materials on International Law* (Sweet and Maxwell 2011), 421; Preamble and Section 14 (2) (b), 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (CFRN [as amended]); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2010 [n12]), 12–13, 15–16, 28, 30–31, 33, 35, 45, 237, 330–331 and 335; E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2013 [n70]).

³ WCED (n20), 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union [IUCN]) *et al* (1980 [n9]).

⁶ FEPA, *National Policy on the Environment* (FEPA 1999) 1; *cff* M. P. Healy, 'The Sustainable Development Principle in United States Environmental Law' [2011] 2 (2) *The George Washington Journal of Energy and Environmental Law*, 19–41.

that the cost of a resource to a user must include all the environmental costs associated with its extraction, transformation and usage, including the cost of foregone alternative or future uses or usages. Five, the Principle of Intra-Generational Equity postulates that different groups of people within a country or among its present generation of humans have the right to benefit equally, fairly, equitably and in a socially justifiable manner from the exploitation of resources, and that they have equal right to a healthy (a clean, safe and ecologically sound [non-harmful] environment. This is because a healthy environment is a precursor to a healthy people and a healthy society. Six, the Principle of Inter-Generational Equity requires that the needs of present generation are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Seven and lastly, the Principle of Public Participation, often simply described as ‘participation’ (which environmental democracy is an aspect), requires that decisions should, as much as possible, be made by the members of the public, who are affected, or on their behalf by the authorities closest to them. Participation involves interactively taking part in decision-making. It broadly means to inform, consult, involve, collaborate with and empower affected members of the public (citizens and citizen-groups alike) in the process of decision-making. Participation is a way of informing, consulting, involving, collaborating with and empowering affected members of the public in decision-making and decision-implementation processes, so as to place final decisions in their hands, by implementing what they decide. These seven principles of SD convey the links between development processes, environmental factors, humans and natural resources.¹

4.3.2. Principles of SD: The European Commission

Relatively distinct from the seven SD principles outlined by the FRN, the European Commission outlined twelve SD principles.² These are the principle of (i) public environmental order;³ (ii) principle of sustainability;⁴ (iii) principle of carrying capacity (which is aimed at ensuring the desired balance of ecosystems and man-made systems on the Earth’s ecological base);⁵ (iv) principle of obligatory restoration of disturbed ecosystem;⁶ (v) principle of biodiversity;⁷ (vi) principle of common natural heritage;⁸ (vii) principle of restrained development of fragile ecosystems;⁹ (viii) principle of spatial planning;¹⁰ (ix) principle of cultural heritage;¹¹ (x) principle of sustainable urban environment;¹² (xi) principle of the aesthetic value of nature;¹³ and (xii) principle of environment awareness.¹⁴

4.3.3. Principles of SD: Remarks of the United Kingdom (UK) SD Commission

Apart from the foregoing principles of SD outlined by the FRN and the European Commission, the UK SD Commission, while streamlining the subject-matter of SD to the environment, rhetorically asked the question: So, is SD all just about the environment?, and remarks that living within our environmental limits is one of the central principles of SD.¹⁵ These remarks of the UK SD Commission may be considered as the position or posture of the UK Government on SD Principles.¹⁶

4.3.4. Principles of SD: The Pillars and Principles of the Earth Charter Initiative (ECI)

Apart from the foregoing references to principles of SD outlined by the FRN and the European Commission, as well as the remarks of the UK SD Commission, it may be pointed out that the ECI (which

¹ FEPA, National Policy on the Environment (n77), 1.

² M. Decleris (n33), 60–125.

³ *Ibid*, 67–75.

⁴ *Ibid*, 76–84.

⁵ *Ibid*, 85–90.

⁶ *Ibid*, 91–93.

⁷ *Ibid*, 94–96.

⁸ *Ibid*, 99–110.

⁹ *Ibid*, 101–105.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 106–112.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 113–115.

¹² *Ibid*, 116–120.

¹³ *Ibid*, 121–122.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 123–124.

¹⁵ UK Sustainable Development Commission, ‘What is sustainable development: So is it all just about the environment?’ <<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/what-is-sustainable-development.html>>; homepage of the UK Sustainable Development Commission <<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

¹⁶ *Ibid*; c/f M. P. Healy (n77), 19–41.

espouses the values and principles for building a more just, equitable, harmonious, sustainable and peaceful world), identifies four pillars and their component sixteen principles associated with the Charter.¹ From the perspective and framework of the ECI, these pillars (stated hereunder in an alphabetical order) and principles (stated hereunder in numerical order) may also be considered as the pillars and principles of SD.

A): Respect and Care for the Community of Life

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.
2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love.
3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful.
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.²

B): Ecological Integrity

5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights and community well-being.
8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.³

C): Social and Economic Justice

9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative.
10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.
11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care and economic opportunity.
12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.⁴

D): Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace

13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision-making and access to justice.
14. Integrate into formal education and lifelong learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.
15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.
16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence and peace.⁵

From the foregoing, we may reconcile the 'ecological integrity' pillar of SD and the four principles associated with it (namely principles 5 – 8 above) harmoniously with the remarks of the UK SD Commission, to the effect that living within the precincts of the environment is one of the fundamental principles of sustainable development.⁶

4.3.5. Various Principles of SD Emphasising the Same Ethical Precepts and Pragmatic Humane Approaches to SD

From the analysis of the foregoing few examples of SD Principles, we may proceed to state that the Principles advanced by proponents appear different in the form of titles and perspectives but not as regards contents and contexts. Thus, various SD Principles designed and being advocated by their respective proponents, such as countries, institutions, sectors and civil society groups, such as NGOs, around the globe, are embodiments of ethical values and pragmatic ethical approaches to SD. As such, various forms of SD Principles are harmoniously reconcilable on the basis of their ethical precepts and pragmatic humane approaches to SD.

By and large, from the few examples we have analysed, our concluding remarks are that various forms, styles or types of SD Principles are united in their common outlook, which means, they are all cautioning that in

¹ Homepage of the ECI <<https://earthcharter.org/>>; ECI, 'The Earth Charter, 'This is a document with sixteen principles to read, share and live by' <<https://earthcharter.org/>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ UK Sustainable Development Commission, 'What is sustainable development: So is it all just about the environment?' <<http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/what-is-sustainable-development.html>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

the ongoing global march towards SD, human beings should effectively protect the environment and thereby conserve natural resources in tune with the ecological base *vis-à-vis* carrying capacity of our Planet Earth, so as to promote the wellbeing of the human race and overall resources of nature.¹

4.4. SD Goals

The term ‘goal’ refers to expected achievement (what is expected or hoped to be achieved in the course of a mission).² SD Goals may thus be described as concrete evidences to be achieved in the course of ongoing global efforts towards SD.³

It is noteworthy that there has been a transition from an initial category of historic inspirational targets known as the UN Millennium Development Goals (UNMDGs) to the extant, monumental and aspirational targets known as the UN SD Goals (UNSDGs). In terms of goals, efforts of the entire global community (the UN system) to achieve SD ranged from the UNMDGs to the UNSDGs. In the process, by its Resolution 53/202 of 17 December, 1998, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), decided to designate its 55th Session, ‘The Millennium Assembly of the UN’, and to convene, as an integral part of the Millennium Assembly, a Millennium Summit of the UN (UNMS),⁴ which took place from Wednesday, 6 September, to Friday, 8 September, 2000, at UN Headquarters, in New York. The principal document that was unanimously adopted by the UNMS was the UN Millennium Declaration, which expresses a statement of values, principles and objectives that made up an international agenda for the 21st Century. To commit nations (member-states of the UN) and peoples of the world, the Summit framed a series of Eight time-bound Goals, known as the MDGs, which were to be achieved by the target year (2015).⁵ As countries and peoples of the world, particularly those of developing countries, were unable to achieve the MDGs by the target 2015, the global community, under the auspices of the UN, introduced the SD Goals (SDGs), which are Seventeen in number. These Seventeen SDGs are designed to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and prosperity for all as part of a new SD agenda of the UN system.⁶ The SDGs, also known as ‘Global Goals’, constitute a blueprint, master-plan and road-map, which are designed to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.⁷ These Goals address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice, which are confronting humanity, countries and society at large. These Seventeen Goals are interconnected to each other and they are meant to be achieved by the target year (2030), in order not to leave any country or people behind (without achieving them by the afore-stated target year).⁸ Each of these goals has specific targets to be accomplished over a fifteen year period (from 2015), and all sectors of society, namely government, the private sector, civil society groups and individuals, ought to fulfil their respective roles for SDGs to be achieved.⁹

¹ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union [IUCN]) *et al* (1980 [n9]); C. Tan and J. Faundez (ed), *Natural Resources and Sustainable Development: International Economic Law Perspectives* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2017); S. Alam *et al* (eds), *International Natural Resources Law, Investment and Sustainability* (Routledge 2018); A. Hilderling, *International Law, Sustainable Development and Water Management* (Chicago University Press 2005); M. C. Segger and A. Khalifan, *Sustainable Development Law: Principles, Practices, and Prospects* (Oxford University Press 2004).

² Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, ‘goal’ <<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/academic/goal?q=goal>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

³ UN SD Goals Knowledge Platform, ‘Sustainable Development Goals’ <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁴ UN, ‘Conferences, Meetings and Events: Millennium Summit (6 – 8 September 2000)’ <https://www.un.org/en/events/pastevents/millennium_summit.shtml> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁵ UN, ‘Millennium Development Goals and Beyond 2015: News on Millennium Development Goals’ <<https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁶ UNGA, ‘Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 70/1: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ <https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E>; UN, ‘A/RES/70/1 - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 21 Oct 2015’ <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=111&nr=8496&menu=35>>; UNDP, UN SDGs <<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>> all Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁷ UNDP, UN SDGs (n105).

⁸ UN, ‘Sustainable Development Goals: About the Sustainable Development Goals’ <<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁹ *Ibid.*

4.5. SD Indicators

Also, SD has indicators, which are called SD Indicators (SDIs).¹ An indicator may be described as a measurement tool, such as a gauge or meter, guide or standard, sign or signal, which pinpoints the state, level or degree of something. It is a device that shows what a situation is like, such as a state, value or a change in level or speed of something and thus demonstrates the existence of the given situation or clarifies that the state or situation of such existence is true or otherwise.² SDIs measure trends towards SD, so as to enable UN member-states, organisations (including private sector organisations) and peoples around the world, to identify, monitor, evaluate and effectively streamline their efforts towards SD.³ SDIs are directly or indirectly associated with human wellbeing, as they are all targeted towards achieving the wellbeing of humans, the environment and overall nature on Planet Earth.⁴

Using economic indicators as a set of mechanisms towards promoting the achievement of SD, there is the Green Economy Initiative.⁵ This Initiative is designed in the UN system as a contemporary dominant economic model, which has the potential to enhance SD and poverty reduction, towards accelerating human wellbeing, through efficient, environmental protection, conservation, preservation of ecology, ecosystems and ecosystem services.⁶

5. Multidisciplinary and Versatile Nature of SD and SD-Oriented Practices towards the Wellbeing of Humans and Overall Resources of Nature

This sub-heading may be discussed in three divisions, namely ‘Academic Disciplines’, ‘Multidisciplinary and Versatile Nature of SD and SD-Oriented Practices’, and finally ‘SD towards the Wellbeing of Humans and Overall Resources of Nature’.

5.1. Academic Disciplines

An academic discipline may be described as a unit of higher (post-secondary) education, such as a college or university, where teaching, research and specialisation take place.⁷ It is a unit, area, branch or field of study, research and specialisation at the tertiary level of the knowledge industry, such as a university, which may be called a department, centre or an institute within a faculty, college or school, as the case may be.⁸ In this context, SD features as a subject-matter of study and research in all departments, even in a multidisciplinary or

¹ Website of the UNSDI <<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

² Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, ‘indicator’ <<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/academic/indicator?q=indicator>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

³ P. Bartelmus (n27); Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) UK, *Sustainable Development Indicators July 2013* (The National Archives/Sustainable Development Statistics 2013); DEFRA UK, *Sustainable Development Indicators in Your Pocket 2009: An Update of the UK Government Strategy Indicators* (DEFRA 2009); S. Bell and S. Morse, *Sustainability Indicators: Measuring the Immeasurable?* (Earthscan 2008); UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), *Indicators of Sustainable Development: Guidelines and Methodologies* (UN 2007).

⁴ UN, ‘United Nations Division for Sustainable Development Expert Group Meeting on Indicators of Sustainable Development New York, 13-15 December, 2005 (UNSD/EGM/ISD/2005/CRP.8)’ <<https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/egmIndicators/crp8.pdf>> Accessed 27 April, 2020; DEFRA UK, *Sustainable Development Indicators July 2013* (DEFRA/Crown 2013).

⁵ Paragraph 102, ‘Focused Political Outcome Document of the UNCSD (Rio+20), 2012, ‘The Future We Want – Outcome Document’, captioned ‘Green Bridge Partnership Programme’ towards SD.

⁶ W. L. Filho *et al* (eds), *Sustainable Economic Development: Green Economy and Green Growth* (Springer International Publishing 2017); J. A. P. de Oliveira (ed), *Green Economy and Good Governance for Sustainable Development: Opportunities, Promises and Concerns* (UN University Press 2012); W. Hynes and S. Wang, *Green Growth and Developing Countries: A Summary for Policy Makers* (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2012); UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, ‘Green Economy Initiative’ <<https://www.unsystem.org/content/green-economy-initiative-gei>>; UNEP, ‘Green Industrial Policy: Concept, Policies, Country Experiences’ <<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/green-industrial-policy-concept-policies-country-experiences>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

⁷ Collins Dictionary, ‘academic discipline’ <<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/academic-discipline>>; IGI Global, ‘What is Academic Discipline’ <<https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/the-significance-of-teaching-academic-writing-as-a-discipline-specific-skill/221>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020; D. Buehl, *Developing Readers in the Academic Disciplines* (Stenhouse Publishers 2017).

⁸ *Ibid.*

cross-disciplinary context within a faculty, college or school system, as well as across various faculties, colleges or schools, in a versatile, all-embracing and cutting edge manner.

The academic units of a university may cut across faculties, colleges or schools, such as humanities (arts), social sciences, education and social work, engineering, law, medicine, nursing and health sciences, and continuing education, along with certain specialised centres and institutes.¹

SD may be taught and researched at a university-wide level and even in professional-wide contexts, such as within a particular profession or across the board of many or all the professions, as concept, principle and practice towards the wellbeing of the humankind, overall resources of nature and society at large on Planet Earth. There are thus the aspects, concepts, principles and other SD-oriented paraphernalia such as goals and indicators, which we have considered in the foregoing sub-heading. Approaches to SD within and across various academic disciplines and professions are aimed at achieving practical results in the form of the wellbeing of humans and overall nature.²

5.2. Multidisciplinary and Versatile Nature of SD and SD-Oriented Practices

The foregoing division of this sub-heading of the study has already indicated that SD may be taught and researched at the university as well as in a professional context, across the board of many or all the professions. There are thus SD aspects of all the divisions of the knowledge industry, cutting across every discipline, as well as all professional endeavours.³ There are thus studies on subject-matters of the arts and social sciences towards SD,⁴ education⁵ and social work towards SD,⁶ environmental studies towards SD,⁷ environmental assessment (EA) towards SD,⁸ engineering towards SD,⁹ law towards SD,¹⁰ health towards SD,¹ and also governance

¹ Homepage of Harvard University <<https://www.harvard.edu/>>; homepage University of Dundee <<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/>>; homepage University of Port Harcourt <<https://www.uniport.edu.ng/>> all Accessed 27 April, 2020.

² P. Bartelmus (n27); E. Holden *et al* (eds) *The Imperatives of Sustainable Development: Needs, Justice, Limits* (Routledge 2018); P. Dasgupta, *Human Well-Being and the Natural Environment* (Oxford University Press 2001/2003).

³ N. Roorda, *Fundamentals of Sustainable Development* (Routledge 2017); J. F. Sachs, *The Age of Sustainable Development* (University of Columbia Press 2015).

⁴ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN (2019 [n2]); W. G. Ollor, *Economic Management and Sustainable Development in Nigeria* (Onyoma Research Publications 2015).

⁵ W. L. Filho and P. Pace (eds), *Teaching Education for Sustainable Development at University Level: World Sustainability Series* (Springer International Publishing 2016); R. Firth and M. Smith (eds), *Education for Sustainable Development: What was Achieved in the DESD?* (Routledge 2017).

⁶ B. S. Verma, *Social Work, Social Development and Sustainable Development* (Centrum Press 2016); S. Hessle (ed), *Environmental Change and Sustainable Social Development: Social Work-Social Development Volume II* (Routledge 2016).

⁷ UNEP (2016 [n24]); UNEP, *Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland* (UNEP 2011); S. Baker, *Sustainable Development* (Routledge 2016); A. Sacquet, *World Atlas of Sustainable Development: Economic, Social and Environmental Data (Fully Updated to 2005)* (Wimbledon Publishing Company 2005).

⁸ N. S. Benebo, *Appropriate Mechanisms for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development in Nigeria: An Advocate's Viewpoint* (NESREA 2014); C. George and C. Kirkpatrick (eds), *Impact Assessment and Sustainable Development: European Practice and Experience* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2007); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2016 [n26]), 1303–1304; P. André *et al.*, *Environmental Assessment for Sustainable Development: Processes, Actors and Practice* (École Polytechnique de Montréal 2004); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2013 [n70]), 33–49, 73–96, 276–285 and 289–293; B. Sadler *et al* (eds), *Handbook of Strategic Environmental Assessment* (Earthscan 2011); R. Therivel, *Strategic Environmental Assessment in Action* (Earthscan 2012); B. Dalal-Clayton and B. Sadler, *Strategic Environmental Assessment: A Sourcebook and Reference Guide to International Experience* (International Institute for Environment and Development Routledge 2005); H. Abaza *et al*, *Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment: Towards an Integrated Approach* (UNEP 2004); M. McCabe and B. Sadler (eds), *Studies of EIA Practice in Developing Countries: A Supplement to the UNEP EIA Training Resource Manual* (Economics and Trade Branch, Division of Technology, Industry and Economics [DTIE] UNEP, 2002); International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) (n47); N. Mirovitskaya and W. Asher (eds), *Guide to Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy* (Duke University Press 2001).

⁹ A. Azapagic and K. Yazaki (eds), *Sustainable Development in Practice: Case Studies for Engineers and Scientists* (John Wiley & Sons 2011).

¹⁰ A. Ross (n34); A. Boyle and D. Freestone (eds), *International Law and Sustainable Development: Past*

towards SD.²

From the foregoing, academic researches abound on various aspects of law as well as multi-disciplinary studies, which are sensitising countries and peoples around the globe and the entire global community towards SD and SD-oriented practices. Increasingly, the emerging law and practice of SD together with multidisciplinary studies on SD and SD-oriented practices are taking place to boost ongoing and increasingly advancing global efforts, pioneered and being spearheaded by the UN, so as to achieve SD, towards the wellbeing of the human race, the environment and other resources of nature on Planet Earth.

5.3. SD towards the Wellbeing of Humans and Overall Resources of Nature

As already mentioned, approaches to SD within and across various academic disciplines and professions are aimed at sensitising countries and peoples around the globe and the entire global community to achieve practical results in the form of improving the wellbeing of humans and overall nature. The ultimate concern of SD is to achieve the wellbeing of humans, the environment and other resources of nature on Planet Earth. The wellbeing of the environment, which is associated with effective protection of the environment, conservation of ecosystems and ecosystem services, relates to the carrying capacity of the Earth. Studies in this area are aimed at promoting how to ensure a balance or the desired balance of ecosystems and man-made systems on the Earth's ecological base, so as to achieve ecological sustainability.³

Global efforts as well as those of sovereign states and peoples around the world, which are aimed at achieving SD, are basically centred on promoting and ensuring the wellbeing of humans and overall nature on Planet Earth. SD advocates and enhances human wellbeing in the context of equitable and harmonious relationship between humans and overall resources of nature, particularly the environment and its supporting ecological base, ecosystems (the health and integrity of ecosystems) and eco-system services on the Planet Earth.⁴ SD emphasises and pursues how to achieve human wellbeing as well as equitable and harmonious relationship between humans, variety of nature in society and natural resources on Planet Earth.⁵

The term 'wellbeing' is a very broad, elastic, versatile and an all-embracing one. Wellbeing in

Achievements and Future Challenges (Oxford University Press 2001); Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin (n55); J. W. Futrell, *The Transition to Sustainable Development Law* (Environmental Law Institute 1994).

¹ E. Hutchinson and S. Kovats (ed), *Environment, Health and Sustainable Development: Understanding Public Health* (Open University Press 2017); W. Rosa (ed), *A New Era in Global Health: Nursing and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Springer Publishing Co. Inc. 2017); K. Schroeder et al, *Sustainable Healthcare* (Wiley-Blackwell 2013); M. Landon, *Environment, Health and Sustainable Development: Understanding Public Health* (Open University Press 2006).

² K. Ginther et al (eds) (n71); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2013 [n70]).

³ The International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union [IUCN]) et al (1980 [n9]); P. Bartelmus (n27); D. A. Munro (n27); P. Dasgupta (n118); R. J. Estes and M. J. Sirgy (eds) *The Pursuit of Human Well-Being: The Untold Global History* (Springer International Publishing 2017); M. McGillivray and Clarke M. (eds), *Human Well-Being: Concept and Measurement* (Palgrave Macmillan 2007); Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, *Ecosystems and Human Well-Being: Synthesis Report* (Island Press 2005); D. C. Esty (ed), *A Better Planet: 40 Big Ideas for a Sustainable Future* (Yale University Press 2019); G. R. Lueddeke, *Survival: One Health, One Planet, One Future* (Routledge Studies in Sustainability) (Routledge 2019); E. T. Bristol-Alagbariya (2020 [n12], 45–46).

⁴ M. R. Foster, *The Human Relationship to Nature: The Limit of Reason, the Basis of Value, and the Crisis of Environmental Ethics* (Lexington Books 2016); The International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union [IUCN]) et al (1980 [n9]).

⁵ UNGA, Sixty-Eighth Session, item 19 of Provisional Agenda, Sub-item (h), 'Harmony with Nature: Report of the Secretary-General', dated 26 July, 2013, <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2007harmony.pdf>> Accessed 27 April, 2020; I.G. Simmons, *The Ecology of Natural Resources* (Hodder Arnold 1981); S. R. Kellert (n10); J. Radkau (n10); J. V. Walther (n10); Principle 3, Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, 1972, which states as follows: *Man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing. In our time, man's capability to transform his surroundings, if used wisely, can bring to all peoples the benefits of development and the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. Wrongly or heedlessly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to human beings and the human environment. We see around us growing evidence of man-made harm in many regions of the earth: dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; major and undesirable disturbances to the ecological balance of the biosphere; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable resources; and gross deficiencies, harmful to the physical, mental and social health of man, in the man-made environment, particularly in the living and working environment;* Principle 1, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992.

Developing Countries (WeD) Research Group, Centre for Development Studies, Bath University, Somerset, England, United Kingdom, defines wellbeing in the manner stated hereunder:

*a state of being with others, where human needs are met, where one can act meaningfully to pursue one's goals, and where one enjoys a satisfactory quality of life.*¹

Accordingly, the UK Government defines wellbeing in the following manner:

*a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important personal goals and participate in society. It is enhanced by conditions that include supportive personal relationships, strong and inclusive communities, good health, financial and personal security, rewarding employment, and a healthy and attractive environment. Consequently, numerous factors may influence an individual's wellbeing.*²

Various definitions, descriptions and analyses of wellbeing as well as discussions on same mainly indicate a state of equilibrium or balance that can be affected by life events or challenges in relation to humans and natural resources. By and large, SD requires a fairer and kinder world, where people would become healthier, wealthier and to live longer, through caring, equitable and harmonious progress and prosperity between nations and peoples of the world.³ Accordingly, SD emphasises the need for equitable existence within society as well as within the entire global community,⁴ which recognises the essence of just and harmonious co-existence between the human race, natural resources and other life forms (overall nature) on our Planet (Mother Earth).⁵

6. Conclusion

So far, this study has given account of age-old efforts and activities of the human race on sustainability and sustainable development (SD). It states that the history of human civilisation demonstrates that SD is associated with sustainability and that whereas the movement towards sustainability dates back to the beginning of human civilisation, the concept of sustainability is relatively new. As such, by the end of the 20th Century, many of the ideas and activities about sustainability, centred for instance on efficient environmental protection and conservation, which are designed to promote the wellbeing of humans and overall resources of nature, had come together in the worldwide call for SD. Consequently, the study highlights that humanity and society at large within the Planet Earth are in the age of SD. In essence, SD is the engineering force of society in the 21st Century, as individuals, other units and sectors of society are eager to achieve it. Simply and precisely, there is an all-round global quest for SD, such that the entire ranks and files of society are committed to it, so as to promote and actualise its achievement.

The study discusses SD, its aspects, concepts, principles, goals and indicators. It describes SD and projects the Earth Charter Initiative (ECI), which espouses the values and principles for building a more just, equitable, harmonious, sustainable and peaceful world. Accordingly, it adopts the classic definition of SD given by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), popularly called the Brundtland Commission, in its historic and epoch-making report, entitled *Our Common Future*, which was published in 1987. The study refers to the main recommendation of the WCED, that the solution to the compelling demand for environmental protection in the course of economic development should be a new approach, namely SD. Put

¹ Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 'Research Statement' <<http://www.bath.ac.uk/soc-pol/welldev/research/aims.htm>>; Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Research Group on Wellbeing in Developing Countries, 'Working Papers' <<http://www.bath.ac.uk/soc-pol/welldev/research/working.htm>> both Accessed 27 April, 2020.

² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), UK (2009 [n11]), 119–120; DEFRA UK, 'Sustainable Development Indicators in Your Pocket' <<https://data.gov.uk/dataset/cbd3ee8e-5bfb-4c2a-85b0-7a5b2ae4ffa1/sustainable-development-indicators-in-your-pocket>> Accessed 27 April, 2020.

³ A. Deaton, *The Great Escape: Health, Wealth, and the Origins of Inequality* (Princeton University Press 2015); T. Jackson (2009 [n20]); T. Jackson (2011 [n20]).

⁴ A. Deaton (n134).

⁵ WCED (n20), 65; UN, 'Harmony with Nature: United Nations' <<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/>>; homepage of the ECI (n2); both Accessed 27 April, 2020; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination, *Achieving Sustainable Development and Promoting Development Cooperation: Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council* (n2); Principle 1, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992, which provides *that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature*; The International Union for Conservation of Nature (The World Conservation Union [IUCN]) *et al* (1980 [n9]); P. H. Kahn (Jr.), *The Human Relationship with Nature: Development and Culture* (MIT Press 2001); I.G. Simmons, *The Ecology of Natural Resources* (Hodder Arnold 1981); S. R. Kellert (n10); J. Radkau (n10); J. V. Walther (n10).

otherwise, the ground-breaking and bullet-form recommendation of the WCED is that SD is the solution to increasing global environmental degradation, devastation and despoliation, which are occasioned in the course of economic development. The Commission thus serves *Our Common Future* (the future of the entire global community on Planet Earth) as a notice to the entire community of countries and peoples of the globe that time has come to seriously and conscientiously promote and practice the intertwined and interwoven relationship of the environment to development, to enhance marriage of economy and efficient environmental protection, through conservation, preservation of ecology, ecosystems and ecosystem services, as a means to promote, support and sustain the carrying capacity of the Earth, towards the wellbeing of the present and future humanity. *Our Common Future* urges governments and their citizens to take responsibility to promote SD, by changing their policies, processes and practices, which are occasioning the degradation, devastation and despoliation of the environment as well as threatening the security and very survival of the human family, other forms of nature and natural resources on Planet Earth. It sensitises, encourages and proposes to the human race, countries and the entire global community to put the environment first, in the course of developmental initiatives and actions (namely plans, policies and programmes [including projects]) so that development would last, by being sustainable.

The aim of this study is to examine SD from the background of law, given that it is an all-embracing and cutting-edge subject-matter. The study utilises the platform and framework of socio-legal methodology to approach SD as a multidisciplinary subject-matter, so as to sensitise countries and peoples of the world to promote and actualise the wellbeing of the human race and society at large on Planet Earth.

SD, premised on the ongoing global march to promote and achieve it, requires that human beings should effectively protect the environment and conserve natural resources in tune with the ecological base *vis-à-vis* carrying capacity of our Planet Earth, so as to promote the wellbeing of the human race and overall resources of nature. SD promotes the wellbeing of humans, the environment and other resources of nature on Planet Earth. It promotes the wellbeing of the environment and its supporting ecological base, ecosystems (the health and integrity of ecosystems) and eco-system services. It requires a balance of ecosystems and man-made systems on the Earth's ecological base, so as to achieve ecological sustainability. SD emphasises and pursues how to achieve human wellbeing and harmonious relationship between humans, variety of nature in society and natural resources on Planet Earth. On the whole, SD emphasises the need for equitable existence within society as well as within the entire global community, which recognises the essence of sound, equitable and harmonious co-existence between the human race, natural resources and other life forms on our Planet Earth. Accordingly, SD requires a fairer and kinder world, where people would become healthier, wealthier and to live longer, through caring, equitable and harmonious progress and prosperity between all sovereign states (nations) and peoples of the world within Planet (Mother Earth).

SD primarily regulates the conducts of human beings and society in sovereign states, and thereby imposes responsibilities on governments of these states (public sector governments) to achieve SD in the interest of their peoples and states. In effect, public sector governments around the globe, international institutions, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), sectors of the global economy, as well as sectors of domestic economies and civil society groups, including NGOs within sovereign states, are committed to SD. They align themselves with strategies designed to promote and achieve SD. Also, all professions and disciplines of the knowledge industry are committed to SD, albeit realising its multidisciplinary, multi-dimensional and all-encompassing nature. So, every discipline of the knowledge industry as well as all professionals and non-professionals realise that to achieve SD requires multidisciplinary, multifaceted, multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional, versatile and all-encompassing approaches.

Considering the degree of multidisciplinary, multifaceted, multi-sectoral, multi-dimensional, versatile and all-encompassing approaches required to promote and achieve SD, law, particularly SD law, has key roles to play in order to regulate conducts in society. Law governs the conducts of human beings and society at large. Essentially, the promotion and achievement of SD involves regulation of conducts of countries and peoples around the world. SD law and practice thus have crucial, compelling and inevitable roles to play, in the ongoing global march, pioneered and being ably superintended over by the UN, to promote and achieve SD in the overall interest of humanity and society at large on Planet Earth. This is where the crucial, compelling and inevitable roles and essence of law come to play, given that law is the regulator of conducts in society, as well as the governor of relations between and among individuals, groups, entities and society at large within sovereign states and peoples of whole wide world.

We therefore advocate and recommend strengthening of the increasingly evolving SD law and practice based on ongoing worldwide all-embracing multidisciplinary SD-oriented efforts and activities towards the wellbeing of humans, the environment and other resources of nature in society. We recommend strengthening of the progressively evolving SD law and practice, as well as the prevailing overarching multidisciplinary SD-oriented efforts, so as to promote and continuously improve the wellbeing of the human race, other life forms and natural resources, as well as vibrant harmonious co-existence between all nations and peoples of the globe

on our Planet (Mother Earth).

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