

1960s

1962 - *Silent Spring* by

Rachel Carson brought together research on toxicology, ecology and epidemiology to suggest that agricultural pesticides were building to catastrophic levels. This was linked to damage to animal species and to human health.

1967 - EDF Environmental Defense Fund formed to pursue legal solutions to environmental damage. EDF goes to court to stop the Suffolk County Mosquito Control Commission from spraying DDT on the marshes of Long Island.

<http://www.environmentaldefense.org/>

1968 - Biosphere Intergovernmental Conference for Rational Use and Conservation of Biosphere (UNESCO) is held; early discussions of the concept of ecologically sustainable development. <http://www.unesco.org/>

1968 - Paul Ehrlich publishes *Population Bomb* on the connection between human population, resource exploitation and the environment.

http://www.pbs.org/population_bomb/

1969 - Friends of the Earth

forms as a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to protecting the planet from environmental degradation; preserving biological, cultural and ethnic diversity; and empowering citizens to have a voice in decision-making.

<http://www.foe.org/>

1969 - National Environmental Policy Act

is passed in the U.S., creating the Council on Environmental Quality and establishing a national policy for the environment.

<http://es.epa.gov/oeca/ofa/nepa.html>

1969 - Partners in Development/

1970 - IDRC Report of the Commission on International Development, chaired by former Prime Minister of Canada, Lester B. Pearson. First of the international commissions to consider new approach to development, focused on research and knowledge in the South. Led to the formation of the IDRC.

<http://www.idrc.ca/>

1970s

1970 - First Earth Day held as a national teach-in on the environment. An estimated 20 million people participated in peaceful demonstrations across the U.S.

<http://earthday.envirolink.org/history.html>

1970 - Natural Resources Defense Council

forms with a professional staff of lawyers and scientists to push for comprehensive U.S. environmental policy.

<http://www.nrdc.org/>

1971 - Greenpeace starts up in Canada

and launches an aggressive agenda to stop environmental damage through civil protests and non-violent interference.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/>

1971 - Founex Report is prepared

by a panel of experts meeting in Founex, Switzerland, in June 1971. It calls for the integration of environment and development strategies.

1971 - Polluter Pays Principle

OECD Council says that those causing pollution should pay the costs.

1971 - International Institute for Environment & Development (IIED)

established in Britain with a mandate to seek ways to make economic progress without destroying the environmental resource base.

<http://www.iied.org/>

1971 - Rene Dubos and Barbara Ward write *Only One Earth*.

The book sounds an urgent alarm about the impact of human activity on the biosphere but also expresses optimism that a shared concern for the future of the planet could lead humankind to create a common future.

1972 - UN Conference on Human Environment/UNEP

held in Stockholm under the leadership of Maurice Strong. The conference is rooted in the regional pollution and acid rain problems of northern Europe. The conference leads to establishing many national environmental protection agencies and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). <http://www.unep.org/>

1972 - Environnement et Développement du Tiers-Monde (ENDA)

is established to provide courses and training about environment and development in Africa. In 1978 it refocuses, becoming an international voluntary non-profit organization concerned with empowering local peoples, eliminating poverty, and research and training for sustainable development at all levels.

<http://www.enda.sn/>

1972 - Club of Rome publishes

Limits to Growth. The report is extremely controversial because it predicts dire consequences if growth is not slowed. Northern countries criticize the report for not including technological solutions while Southern countries are incensed because it advocates abandonment of economic development.

<http://www.clubofrome.org/>

1973 - U.S. enacts

Endangered Species Act to better safeguard, for the benefit of all citizens, the nation's heritage in fish, wildlife and plants. <http://www.audubon.org/campaign/esa/esa.html>

1973 - Chipko

movement born in India in response to deforestation and environmental degradation. The actions of the women of the community influenced both forestry and women's participation in environmental issues.

http://www.rightlivelivelihood.se/recipe1987_2.html

1973 - OPEC oil crisis

fuels limits to growth debate.

1974 - Rowland and Molina release

CFCs work in the scientific journal, *Nature*, calculating that continued use of CFC gases at an unaltered rate would critically deplete the ozone layer. <http://www.ourplanet.com/imgversn/92/rowland.html>

1974 - Latin American World Model

developed by the Fundacio Bariloche; presented at the Second IIASA Symposium on Global Modelling. It is the South's response to *Limits to Growth* and calls for growth and equity for the Third World.

1975 - CITES Convention on International

Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna comes into effect. <http://www.cites.org>

1975 - Worldwatch Institute

established in the U.S. to raise public awareness of global environmental threats and catalyze effective policy responses; begins publishing annual *State of the World* in 1984.

<http://www.worldwatch.org/>

1976 - Habitat

First global meeting to link environment and human settlement.

1977 - Greenbelt Movement

starts in Kenya. It is based on community tree-planting to prevent desertification.

1977 - UN Conference on Desertification

is held. <http://infoserver.ciesin.org/docs/002-478/002-478.html>

1978 - Amoco Cadiz oil spill

off the coast of Brittany. http://www.mairiebrest.fr/amoco_symposium/

Silent Spring was published in 1962. The book's release was considered by many to be a turning point in our understanding of the interconnections among the environment, the economy and social well-being. Since then, many milestones have marked the journey toward sustainable development.

1978 - OECD Directorate of the Environment relaunches research on environment and economic linkages.
<http://www.oecd.org/>

1979 - Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution is adopted.
<http://sedac.ciesin.org/pidb/texts/transboundary.air.pollution.1979.html>

1979 - Banking on the Biosphere
IIED report on practices of nine multilateral development agencies, including the World Bank, sets the stage for reforms which are still underway.

1979 - Three Mile Island nuclear accident occurs in Pennsylvania, USA.
<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/crsweb/tmi/tmi.htm>

1980s

1980 - World Conservation Strategy released by IUCN. The section "Towards Sustainable Development" identifies the main agents of habitat destruction as poverty, population pressure, social inequity and the terms of trade. It calls for a new international development strategy with the aims of redressing inequities, achieving a more dynamic and stable world economy, stimulating economic growth and countering the worst impacts of poverty. <http://www.iucn.org/>

1980 - Independent Commission on International Development Issues publishes *North-South, A Programme for Survival* (Brandt Report). It asks for a re-assessment of the notion of development and calls for a new economic relationship between North and South.

1980 - U.S. President Jimmy Carter authorizes study leading to the Global 2000 report. This report recognizes biodiversity for the first time as a critical characteristic in the proper functioning of the planetary ecosystem. It asserts that the robust nature of ecosystems is weakened by species extinction.

1981 - World Health Assembly unanimously adopts a Global Strategy for Health for All by the year 2000. Affirmed that the major social goal of governments and WHO should be the attainment of a level of health by all people of the world that would permit them to lead socially and economically productive lives. <http://www.who.org/>

1982 - World Resources Institute established in the U.S. Begins publishing annual assessments of World Resources in 1986.
<http://www.wri.org/>

1982 - UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is adopted. It establishes material rules concerning environmental standards as well as enforcement provisions dealing with pollution of the marine environment.
<http://www.un.org/Depts/los/index.htm>

1982 - International debt crisis erupts and threatens the world financial system. It turns the 1980s into a lost decade for Latin America and other developing regions.

1982 - The United Nations World Charter for Nature published. It adopts the principle that every form of life is unique and should be respected regardless of its value to humankind. It also calls for an understanding of our dependence on natural resources and the need to control our exploitation of them. <http://sedac.ciesin.org/pidb/texts/world.charter.for.nature.1982.html>

1983 - Development Alternatives established in India. It fosters a new relationship among people, technology and the environment in the South in order to attain sustainable development.
<http://www.devalt.org/>

1984 - Toxic chemical leak leaves 10,000 dead and 300,000 injured in Bhopal, India.
<http://www.bhopal.net/>

1984 - Drought in Ethiopia
Between 250,000 and 1 million people die from starvation.

1984 - Third World Network is founded during an international conference, "The Third World: Development or Crisis?," which was organized by the Consumers Association of Penang. TWN's role is to be the activist voice of the South on issues of economics, development and environment.
<http://www.twinside.org.sg/twnintro.htm>

1984 - International Conference on Environment and Economics (OECD). Concludes that the environment and economics should be mutually reinforcing. Helped to shape *Our Common Future*.

1985 - Responsible Care®
An initiative of the Canadian Chemical Producers. Provides a code of conduct for chemical producers which is now adopted in many countries. <http://www.ccpa.ca/>

1985 - Climate change. Austria meeting of World Meteorological Society, UNEP and the International Council of Scientific Unions reports on the build-up of CO₂ and other "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere. They predict global warming. <http://www.unep.ch/iuc/submenu/infokit/factcont.htm>

1985 - Antarctic ozone hole discovered by British and American scientists.

1986 - Accident at nuclear station in Chernobyl generates a massive toxic radioactive explosion. <http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~meshkati/chernobyl.html>

1987 - Our Common Future Brundtland Report Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development weaves together social, economic, cultural and environmental issues and global solutions. Chaired by Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. Popularizes term "sustainable development."

the sustainable development timeline

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Please send recommendations for future versions of the Timeline to:
info@iisd.ca

The Sustainable Development Timeline captures some of the key events. IISD has prepared this third edition of the Timeline in advance of the World Summit on Sustainable Development with the generous support of Environment Canada.

IISD's vision is better living for all—sustainably. Its mission is to champion innovation, enabling societies to live sustainably.

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1987 - Development Advisory Committee
DAC members of OECD evolve guidelines for environment and development in bilateral aid policies. <http://www.oecd.org/EN/about/0,,EN-aboutnotheme-2-no-no-no-0,FF.html>

1987 - Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer is adopted. <http://www.unep.ch/ozone/home.htm>

1988 - Chico Mendes
Brazilian rubber tapper fighting the destruction of the Amazon rainforest is assassinated. Scientists use satellite photos to document what the Amazon fires are doing to the rainforest. <http://www.chicomendes.com/>

1988 - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change established to assess the most up-to-date scientific, technical and socioeconomic research in the field. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

1989 - Exxon Valdez tanker runs aground dumping 11 million gallons of oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. <http://www.oilspill.state.ak.us/>

1989 - Stockholm Environment Institute established as an independent institute for carrying out global and regional environmental research. <http://www.sei.se/>

1990 - Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe established as an independent, non-profit organization to assist environmental non-governmental organizations, governments, businesses and other environmental stakeholders to fulfill their role in a democratic, sustainable society. <http://www.rec.org/>

1990 - UN Summit for Children. Important recognition of the impact of the environment on future generations. <http://www.unicef.org/wsc/>

1990 - International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) established in Canada. Begins publishing the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* in 1992. <http://www.iisd.org/>

1991 - The Canadian east coast cod fishery collapses when only 2,700 tonnes of spawning biomass are left after a harvest of 190,000 tonnes. <http://www.greenpeace.org/~comms/cbio/canccod.html>

1991 - Hundreds of oil fires burn out of control in Kuwait for months following the Persian Gulf War.

1992 - The Business Council for Sustainable Development publishes *Changing Course*. Establishes business interests in promoting SD practices. <http://www.wbcsd.ch/>

1992 - Earth Summit. UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, under the leadership of Maurice Strong. Agreements reached on Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Rio Declaration, and non-binding Forest Principles. Concurrent NGO Global Forum publishes alternative treaties. <http://www.unep.org/unep/partners/un/unced/home.htm>

1992 - The Earth Council is established in Costa Rica as a focal point for facilitating follow-up and implementation of the agreements reached at the Earth Summit, and linking national SD councils. <http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr/>

1993 - President's Council for Sustainable Development in U.S. announced by President Bill Clinton. They publish *Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and a Healthy Environment for the Future* in 1996. <http://clinton2.nara.gov/PCSD/>

1993 - First meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development established to ensure effective follow-up to UNCED, enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision-making capacity. <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>

1993 - World Conference on Human Rights
Governments re-affirmed their international commitments to all human rights. Appointment of the first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. <http://www.unhchr.ch/>

1994 - Global Environment Facility
Billions of aid dollars restructured to give more decision-making power to developing countries. The GEF affirms its commitment to fund projects that are country-driven, based on national priorities and reflect the incremental costs of meeting international commitments that achieve global environmental benefits. <http://www.gefweb.org/>

1994 - North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) enters into force. The side agreement—the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation—establishes the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC). <http://www.cec.org/>

1995 - The execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria brings international attention to the linkages between human rights, environmental justice, security and economic growth. <http://www.mosopcanada.org/text/ken.html>

1995 - World Trade Organization established. Formal recognition of trade, environment and development linkages. <http://www.wto.org/>

2000s

2000 - Increasing urbanization. Almost half of the world's population now lives in cities that occupy less than two per cent of the Earth's land surface, but use 75 per cent of Earth's resources. <http://www.aas.org/international/atlas/contents/pages/population06.html>

2000 - The Second World Water Forum and Ministerial held in The Netherlands and attended by 5,700 participants from all parts of the world and 120 ministers. It results in the Declaration of The Hague on Water Security in the 21st Century. The World Commission on Water for the 21st Century also releases its "World Water Vision" for the sustainable use and management of water resources. <http://www.worldwaterforum.net/>

2000 - United Nations Millennium Summit
This largest-ever gathering of world leaders adopted the United Nations World Summit Declaration, which spells out values and principles, as well as goals in key priority areas. World leaders agreed that the UN's first priority was the eradication of extreme poverty and highlighted the importance of a fairer world economy in an era of globalization. <http://www.un.org/millennium/summit.htm>

2000 - Miss Waldron's red colobus monkey declared extinct. It is the first extinction in several centuries of a member of the Primate Order, to which human beings belong. According to the IUCN Red Book, 11,046 species are threatened with extinction. <http://wcs.org/news/wcsreports/6989/#story4>

2001 - Terrorists representing anti-Western, non-state interests and ideologies, bomb the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the first serious attack on U.S. soil since 1814, thus marking the end of an era of unhindered economic expansion. Repercussions are felt throughout the world, as stock markets and economies stumble and the United States gears up for a war on terrorism with its first target being terrorists' networks in Afghanistan. <http://www.globalpolicy.org/wtc/wtcindex.htm>

1995 - World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen, Denmark. First time that the international community has expressed a clear commitment to eradicate absolute poverty. <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/index.html>

1995 - Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China. Delegates adopt the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. These documents recognize that the status of women has advanced but obstacles still remain to the realization of women's rights as human rights. <http://www.undp.org/fwcw/daw1.htm>

2001 - Fourth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Doha, Qatar, sets the stage for the next round of world trade talks and features environment and development issues in several sections of The Doha Declaration. The WTO Committee on Trade and Environment is given a watching brief on the entire negotiation agenda to ensure that environmental issues are adequately addressed. NGOs and the WTO agree to re-interpret the Agreement on Intellectual Property Rights regarding access to medicines and public health. <http://www.ictsd.org/ministerial/index.htm>

2001 - The Marrakech Accords, agreed to at COP-7, finalize how the Kyoto Protocol should work, lay the groundwork for ratification by different countries and mark the conclusion of a process begun at COP-4 in Buenos Aires. <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/download/pdf/enb12189e.pdf>

2002 - World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg, South Africa. World governments, concerned citizens, UN agencies, multilateral financial institutions, and other major groups participate and assess global change since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

blanketing the region and causing over US\$1.4 billion in health costs and at least that amount in direct fire-related damage.

Concurrently, the market crashes raising questions about currency speculation and need for government economic reforms. <http://www.ciaonet.org/isa/dap01>

1997 - Signing of the Kyoto Protocol Delegates to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Third Conference of the Parties (COP-3) sign the Kyoto Protocol. This document sets goals for greenhouse gas emission reduction and establishes emissions trading in developed countries and the clean development mechanism for developing countries. <http://unfccc.int/resource/convkp.html>

1997 - UN General Assembly review of Earth Summit

progress Special session acts as a sober reminder that little progress has been made in implementing the Earth Summit's Agenda 21 and ends without significant new commitments. <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/csd/ungass.html>

1998 - Controversy over genetically modified organisms.

Global environmental and food security concerns raised over genetically modified (GM) food products. The EU blocks import of GM crops from North America and farmers in developing countries rebel against "terminator technology," seed that will only germinate once. <http://scope.educ.washington.edu/gmfood/>

1998 - Unusually severe weather. China experiences worst floods in decades; two-thirds of Bangladesh underwater for several months from torrential monsoons; Hurricane Mitch destroys parts of Central America; 54 countries hit by floods and 45 by drought; Earth hits highest global temperature ever recorded. <http://wlf.ncdc.noaa.gov/oa/climate/research/1998/ann/extremes98.html>

1998 - MAI

Environmental groups, social activists and concerned citizens effectively lobby against the multilateral agreement on investment (MAI). That, along with disagreement by governments over the scope of the exceptions being sought, lead to the demise of the negotiations. <http://www.citizen.org/trade/issues/mai/articles.cfm?ID=1021>

1999 - The World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development releases its report *Our Forests...Our Future*. This independent Commission, after extensive hearings with stakeholders worldwide, concluded that the world's material needs from forests can be satisfied without jeopardizing them by changing the way we value and manage forests. <http://www.iisd.org/wcfsd/default.htm>

1999 - Launch of the first global sustainability index tracking leading corporate sustainability practices worldwide. Called the Dow Jones Sustainability Group Indexes, this tool provides a bridge between those companies implementing sustainability principles and investors looking for trustworthy information to guide sustainability-focused investment decisions. <http://www.sustainabilityindex.com/>

1999 - Third World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference held in Seattle, Washington, U.S. Thousands of demonstrators take to the streets to protest the negative effects of globalization and growth of global corporations, and along with deep conflicts among delegates inside scuttle the negotiations. The first of many such anti-globalization protests, they signal a new era of confrontation between disaffected stakeholders and those in power. <http://www.iisd.org/trade/wto/seattleandsd.htm>

1996 - The Summit of the Americas on Sustainable Development held in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. This Summit identified the joint efforts needed to reach SD in the hemisphere. <http://www.summit-americas.org/boliviaplan.htm>

1996 - ISO 14001 Formally adopted as a voluntary international standard for corporate environmental management systems.

1997 - Asian ecological and financial chaos. Land-clearing fires intensified by an El Niño induced drought result in haze