NATUR VÅRDS VERKET

Grid of reference for analysing international conventions or agreements

Report 5251 · October 2002

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
SE-106 48 Stockholm, Sweden
Int.tel: +46 8 698 10 00
Fax: +46 8 698 16 64

Internet: www.naturvardsverket.se
Miljöbokhandeln: www.miljobokhandeln.com

ISBN 91-620-5251-0.pdf

© Swedish Environmental Protection Agency 2002

Grid of reference for analysing international conventions or agreements

Results of a pragmatic exercise to identify common issues in a context of Sustainable Development.

by
Toolika Rastogi[1], Oscar Sarcinelli[2], Laura Lindoro[3] and Mario Catizzone[4]

Introduction

Due primarily to its political implications, the concept of Sustainable Development (SD) has progressively acquired a huge and growing importance in the activity of people and institutions. Each organism, association, structure but also each professional, official, politician, and individual citizen has to reconsider her/his/its own way to produce, act and live.

Questions are raised at different levels on how to concretise and implement the Sustainable Development concept and the related principles. There is no need for a debate on its definition. A further analysis has to focus more on the application of this concept that should be based on common shared values. For the moment, elements that could be considered "common" (because already widely discussed) are those illustrated in the international agreements and conventions. These international texts were written in a specific historical moment and for particular topics. Their formulation responded to the requested specificity. Given the methodological improvements in the implementation of the SD principles, the international documents deserve to be analysed under a Sustainable Development perspective.

The international community requires urgently "a common agreed framework" for checking "coherence" with the SD principles. Thus the international community needs to have an analysis tool that can highlight the common points agreed internationally. This tool could be a kind of "grid of reference" as a checklist to

[1] T. Rastogi: Centre d'Economie et d'Ethique pour l'Environnement et le Développement, Université de Versailles, Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (France).
[2] O. Sarcinelli:M. Student of Campinas University – UNICAMP – Campinas, Brazil.
[3] L. Lindoro: Master Student at C3ED, MsC in Ecological Economics, Environment and Sustainable Development Policies, University of Versailles and S.Quentin-en-Yvelines (France)
[4] M. Catizzone: EC Officer -Visiting Scientist at Naturvårdsverket (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency) – Stockholm (Sweden).

analyse in which way agreements and conventions respond to the requisites of the Sustainable Development principles. The work hereby described is a first attempt to create such a grid.

Initial analysis and common background

Starting from the above assumptions, an electronic debate was held between the 21st of January and the 3rd February 2002 on establishing a "common grid of reference" to study international conventions or agreements. Twenty people attended the debate (see list at the end of this document), representing both senior and junior researchers from several countries in Europe, USA and Latin America. Luckily basic tools for analysis have already been built. In the nineties the Research Directorate General of the European Commission (EC) promoted a specific research area on Sustainable Development.

Capitalising on the results of these researches, the e-conference started the debate on the definition of a common grid of reference from ten previously identified components of sustainability (EC - INSURED Project, now SQM - Sustainable Quality Management system, http://www.sqm-praxis.net/). The following ten components, called "orientators", give the orientation towards Sustainable Development: 1) Environment; 2) Economy; 3) Socio-culture; 4) Equity between individuals; 5) Equity between territories; 6) Equity between generations; 7) Diversity; 8) Subsidiarity; 9) Networks/Partnership; 10) Participation.

The final result of the e-conference was a scheme of work to be used as "reference tool" to be tested through a direct analysis of international conventions and agreements. A group of four people, using the whole scheme adopted by the e-conference, volunteered to test the validity of this reference tool. The work was conducted between March and August 2002 using mainly the Biological Diversity Convention.

The combined results of these two exercises, the e-conference and the Convention analysis, are presented in the following parts of this document. The final product is a "scheme for Sustainable Development analysis" ready to be used. It should not be considered exhaustive but rather as a first elaboration. Further improvements have to be foreseen by testing the grid with other international agreements. Only after a succession of comparative analyses between the several attempts and the involvement of other critical actors of different sectors, it will possible to establish a grid that will receive a common appreciation and agreement. In this sense any suggestion, comment, critic is more than welcome, please address it to any of the four responsible writers.

Agreed work scheme

First step:
Reading the document according to the "content analysis" method. Some basic key words should be elicited, as well as their relevance within the paragraphs analysed. Then, they should be interconnected in order to find the real meaning of the texts.

Second step:
Drafting a short summary, maximum one page, with the content and main issues of the international document to illustrate the subject to be analysed. It should shortly describe: i) the document subject, ii) the actual target group, iii) the most important issues/ recommendations, iv) their implications/impacts and for whom; v) points that have to be known about the document.

Third step:
Re-reading the document considering the following list of questions to analyse it from a Sustainable Development point of view. The last few questions are similar for each "orientator". They are intended to better identify the basis for analysis integration.

1) Environment:

1. How well is the environmental dimension taken into consideration?
2. How well is a holistic approach or analysis used?
3. How well are the physical elements (soil, water, air, biodiversity) considered?
4. How well does an ecosystem approach incorporate the physical elements applied?
5. How well is the human component considered?
6. How well are the limits or thresholds considered ?
7. How well are specific risks or impacts taken into account ?
8. How strong is the reference to the need of changing individual human environmental behaviour ?
9. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the environmental point of view ?
10. How are future generations taken into consideration from the environmental point of view?
11. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development concept established ?
12. How well are the mechanisms for information /dialogue between environmental actors and other actors clarified ?

2) Economy:

13. How well is "globalisation" taken into consideration ?
14. How are the links between local and global markets considered ?

15. How are the relationships with private sectors and industries afforded?
16. How is the reference to re-utilisation and long-life products taken into account ?
17. How are the distances between sites of production and trade analysed?
18. How well is the use of energy indicated?
19. How well is the need for changing human economical behaviour illustrated?
20. How are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the economic point of view ?
21. How are future generations taken into consideration from the economic point of view ?
22. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development concept established ?
23. How well are the mechanisms for information /dialogue between economic actors and other actors clarified?

3) Socio-culture:

24. How is the benefit from past human traditions indicated ?
25. How are the existing values for the human society referenced and how is the risk of losing identities taken into account ?
26. How well are the needs and tools for dialoguing between actors described ?
27. How are the references to education and training established ?
28. How is the decision making process taken into account and how clear are the directions for the political actors?
29. How are the institutional modifications and adaptations described?
30. What role is suggested for innovation and how well is it considered ?
31. How well is the issue of quality of life addressed ?
32. How are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the socio-cultural point of view ?
33. How are future generations taken into consideration from the socio-cultural point of view ?
34. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development concept established ?
35. How well are the mechanisms for information /dialogue between socio-cultural actors and other actors clarified?

4) Equity between individuals:

36. How well is equity afforded independently for gender, culture, ethnicity…?
37. How well is the need and capacity for multi-cultural integration considered ?
38. How well are solutions for conflicts of interpersonal relationships given?
39. How well are tools for dialoguing indicated ?

40. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the socio-equity point of view ?
41. How are future generations taken into consideration from the socio- equity point of view ?
42. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development concept established ?
43. How well are the mechanisms for information /dialogue between socio-equity actors and other actors clarified ?

5) Equity between territories:

44. How is the analysis on the equity between local and international trade taken into account ?
45. How is the use of natural resources in trans-boundary regions considered ?
46. How well are risks affecting other countries but coming from external region taken into account ?
47. How well are the mechanisms for solving regional (supra national) conflicts indicated ?
48. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the territory-equity point of view ?
49. How are future generations taken into consideration from the territory - equity point of view ?
50. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development concept established ?
51. How well are the mechanisms for information /dialogue between territory - equity actors and other actors clarified ?

6) Equity between generations:

52. How well is the importance of the role of family and/or other social structures considered ?
53. How well are the relationships between present generations taken into account ?
54. How are future generations that still do not exist taken into account?
55. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the generation-equity point of view ?
56. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development concept established ?
57. How well are the mechanisms for information /dialogue between generation - equity actors and other actors clarified ?

7) Diversity:

58. How well is biological diversity analysed or is there reference to it ?
59. How well are references to biological, cultural and economic diversity considered as potentiality for the future of the world?

60. If the loss of diversity is one of the main challenges to afford, how is it threatened (and how well is the threat described)?
61. How is the reference to the impact of choices or policies for diversity described ?
    a. For biodiversity
    b. For cultural diversity
    c. For economic diversity
62. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the diversity point of view ?
    a. For biodiversity
    b. For cultural diversity
    c. For economic diversity
63. How are future generations taken into consideration from the diversity point of view ?
    a. For biodiversity
    b. For cultural diversity
    c. For economic diversity
64. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development concept established ?
65. How well are the mechanisms for information/dialogue between diversity actors and other actors clarified ?

8) Subsidiarity:

66. How well is the analysis on the social, economic and political cohesion considered for different levels of territorial integration and in the decision making process ?
67. How are the mechanisms of multilevel governance considered ?
68. How adequately are global problems at different territorial and decisional levels addressed?
69. How are the international obligations analysed for their local impact ?
70. How adequately is empowerment of individuals and communities considered ?
71. How are institutional implications taken into account ?
72. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the Subsidiarity point of view ?
73. How are future generations taken into consideration from the Subsidiarity point of view ?
74. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development established ?
75. How well are the mechanisms for information/dialogue between Subsidiarity actors and other actors clarified ?

9) Networks/Partnership:

76. How adequately is the partnership between the private and public sectors addressed ?
77. How well are mechanisms for the involvement of individuals and their representatives identified?
78. How well are the concerned institutions at the different levels recognised ?
79. How possible is it in the framework of the international convention to have an exchange of communication between "equals"?
80. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from Networks/Partnership point of view ?
81. How are future generations taken into consideration from the Networks/Partnership point of view ?
82. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development established ?
83. How well are the mechanisms for information/dialogue between Networks/Partnership actors and other actors clarified ?

10) Participation:

84. How well is Participation considered between the most important issues ?
85. How are tools indicated to allow and ameliorate participation ?
86. How well are mechanisms for information/dialogue between all concerned actors and stakeholders clarified?
87. How are the mechanisms for democratic identification of representatives mentioned ?
88. How well is the decision-making process analysed to allow a better and more responsible participation ?
89. How well are the mechanisms foreseen for monitoring the implementation of the convention and the feedback of participants?
90. How well are the "global-local" relationships analysed from the Participation point of view ?
91. How are future generations taken into consideration from the Participation point of view ?
92. How well are the links with other elements of the Sustainable Development established ?

Fourth step:
Introducing for each question the qualitative appreciation in an Excel table using two main fields:

The first is to be chosen between:
Very Well,
Well
Sufficiently
Insufficiently

N/A (Not taken into consideration)

The second will contain an explanation on the reasons for the previous choices as very short written comments (max. three lines per question).

From the analysis of the answers it will be possible to verify the emergence of positive and negative aspects for each orientator. This will facilitate the appreciation from the quality point of view of how that orientator is taken into account in the international document.

Fifth step:
Appreciation of the whole international convention or agreement. The last step should be conducted using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis for the whole document. Again two ways will be used:

for each convention or general agreement a written qualitative analysis illustrating (in one A4 page only):
Strong points
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats

1. a synthetic view in Excel format where each orientator is ranked using from one to max five points:

	Orientator	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
O 1	Environment	□□□□□	□□	□□□	□□□□
O 2	Economy	□□□	□	□	□
O 3	Socio-culture	□□	□□□	□□□□□	□□
O 4	Inter-personal equity	□	□	□□□	□
O 5	Inter-regional equity	□	□	□	□
O 6	Inter-temporal equity	□	□	□	□
O 7	Diversity	□	□	□	□
O 8	Subsidiarity	□	□	□	□
O 9	Networking and partnership	□	□	□	□
O 10	Participation	□	□	□	□

This synthetic profile highlights the constitutive elements of the convention or agreement that better respond to the Sustainable Development concept. It will provide the elements for a further process of rethinking and formulation of the international text. At the same time the profile will identify the parameters to be

used for a process of larger information on the implementation, impact, and performance of the international document.

Agreed work scheme

In synthesis, the whole work will consist of these phases:

1) read the text of the international convention or agreement
2) provide a descriptive analysis of the "content"
3) read the text again considering the different questions listed for each orientator
4) synthesise the answers for each orientator (synthetic scheme available also in Excel format) and provide a descriptive analysis for each orientator
5) appreciate the whole international convention or agreement through a SWOT analysis and a synthetic profile.

Follow up

As announced, this "grid" has to be considered only as the starting point. It is still a rough scheme and many of the possible controversial points will be solved directly through its use/implementation. The whole group of people that launched this initiative will have another period for studying, using and comparing the present results. This period will prepare the ground for a second enlarged electronic debate to validate further results and compare them with the aim to establish a consolidated "grid of reference".
This second e-debate should be launched shortly, possibly in the beginning of 2003.
At the end has to remind that the "grid" it is not the final scope of the exercise but only a useful tool for the concerned people to cope with the implementation of the Sustainable Development concept.

E-mails of Participants to the electronic discussion:
asrossi@hotmail.com; bisinoti@iqm.unicamp.br; envm01054@env.aegean.gr; gfragiou@env.aegean.gr; mtsi@env.aegean.gr; npanag@env.aegean.gr; oscar-sarc@hotmail.com; spapagianni@env.aegean.gr; toolika.rastogi@utoronto.ca; jhudsonw@yahoo.com; Mario.Catizzone@naturvardsverket.se; srs@dada.it; r.schleicher@eures.de; atro@env.aegean.gr; Britta.Ohlsson@geography.gu.se; evlachos@engr.colostate.edu; mir@cnpm.embrapa.br; gspi@aegean.gr; gmats@aegean.gr; laura.lindoro@libero.it; martin.oconnor@c3ed.uvsq.fr; romeiro@cnpm.embrapa.br; Sverker.Carlsson@pol.gu.se

Comments/Suggestions/Criticisms

Please address them by e-mail to any of the writers:

Laura Lindoro laura.lindoro@libero.it
Toolika Rastogi toolika.rastogi@utoronto.ca
Oscar Sarcinelli oscarsarc@hotmail.com
Mario Catizzone mario.catizzone@naturvardsverket.se

Notice

The views expressed are those of the writers. They do not necessarily represent the views of the organisations to which the writers belong. The writers are not responsible for the use that may be made of the information contained in this document. Reproduction of the text or part of it is authorised provided that the source is acknowledged.

Report 5251

Grid of reference for analysing international conventions or agreements

The world challenge launched with the concept of Sustainable Development raised awareness between all the actors of the society for taking care of the planetary resources for our future generations. Civil society, multinationals and international institutions, as main actors of a new global dimension, need to have a common platform based on agreed-shared values.

The common values already identified are those present in international agreements or conventions. These values have to be analysed through the principles responding to the concept of Sustainable Development.
An international group of researchers, with the technical support of Naturvårdsverket, created a specific work methodology to be adapted and used for analysing international documents. The work here presented illustrates an updated version of this methodology and re-launches a further debate for its definition.

ISBN 91-620-5251-0.pdf
ISSN 0282-7298

Swedish Environmental Protection Agency