

## World Sustainable Development Outlook 2006

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WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK series is developed to provide an overview of Sustainable Development (SD) and why it is important and to provoke forward thinking on the development of a more coherent approach to solving global problems related to sustainability. In doing so, a holistic approach is used to critically examine the inter-relationship between the natural, the governmental, the economic and the social dimensions of our world and how science and technology can contribute to solutions.

OUTLOOK 2006 is a truly global source book reflected in the varied national and cultural origins of the contributors as well as the topics and case studies covered.

Each year, we will discuss and study a different topic.

The theme of OUTLOOK 2006 has been carefully chosen to discuss global and local resources in achieving SD. The three main sections include:

- *Globalisation and Sustainable Development* (14 chapters)
- *Science, Technology and Innovation* (18 chapters)
- *Business and Management Studies* (16 chapters)

It is our hope that this book will help to stimulate debate amongst scholars, researchers and policy-makers.



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WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK 2006

Allam Ahmed



Volume 2, 2006

# WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK 2006

Global and Local Resources in  
Achieving Sustainable Development

Editor: Allam Ahmed



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## Preface

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*WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OUTLOOK* series is developed to address growing concerns for the future of our inter-locked ecological, political and economic systems in a highly populated world that is characterised by major social and economic disparities. The main objective is to provide an overview of Sustainable Development (SD) and why it is important and to provoke forward thinking on the development of a more coherent approach to solving global problems related to sustainability. In doing so, a holistic approach is used to critically examine the inter-relationship between the natural, the governmental, the economic and the social dimensions of our world and how science and technology can contribute to solutions. A framework for understanding and acting upon these solutions will be presented, taking into account a variety of international, institutional and intellectual perspectives.

SD is not just a concern for Developing Countries (DCs). All countries whatever their level of development or past scientific and technological glories must pay attention to it. It is important at every level to develop a clear understanding for a consensus on the meaning of SD and the realities of our common future.

We are pleased to present the second volume in the series, *OUTLOOK 2006*. The theme has been carefully chosen to discuss global and local resources in achieving SD. These papers in this volume have been selected from the 2006 Fourth International Conference of the World Association for Sustainable Development (WASD), organised by the Faculty of Economics, University of Naples, held in November 2006 in Naples, Italy.

The conference attracted more than 100 academics, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers, who represent more than 26 countries worldwide. The response to our call-for-papers has been so high with more than 100 abstracts and papers received covering a wide range of focus and scope of the theme to the extent that we had a difficulty in deciding which papers should be included in this volume. We have finally selected 48 papers with an interesting profile for this volume covering a wide geographical spectrum after a blind peer review process. However due to space limitations, it is obviously impossible to include all papers presented during the conference. *OUTLOOK 2006* represents the best papers presented in the conference by renowned international experts.

The three main sections of the book are:

*Globalisation and Sustainable Development* (15 papers) examine several issues such as: *SD, Social and Local Development, Governance, Accountability, Public Policy and Real Estate for Economic Development.*

*Science, Technology and Innovation* (18 papers) discusses several issues such as: *Science, Technology, Public Health, Food Security, Innovation, Competition, Quality Management, Knowledge Management, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Environmental Issues.*

*Business and Management* (16 papers) discusses several issues such as *Investment, Trade, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Banking, Monetary Policies and Transportation Studies.*

Many authors argue that the concept of SD must enhance the long-term productivity of the resource base and improve the long-term wealth and well being derived from alternative resource-use systems, with acceptable environmental impacts. SD could therefore be defined as an approach that will permit continuing improvements in the quality of life with a lower intensity of resource use, thereby leaving behind for future generations an undiminished or even enhanced stock of natural resources and other assets. However, the major challenge of the coming decades is to learn how long-term large-scale interactions between environment and development can be better managed to increase the prospects for ecologically sustainable improvements in human well-being.

In addition to environmental protection, SD is also concerned with gender equality. Men and women have an equal relationship with -as well as capacity to care for- nature in order to achieve SD. Researchers discuss issues to do with women participation in science. Economic growth, equal opportunity, biological dissimilarities and (dis)ability to do science differently are among the main categories of arguments favourable to and against women participation in science. However, the arguments favourable to women's participation in science seem to outnumber those against it and therefore call for an urgent policy review towards gender and women.

Poverty, in particular rural poverty, has been widely identified as one of the world's greatest problems, affecting the majority of humankind. Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in particular has not recorded any dramatic and sustained agricultural growth. Most efforts at increasing agricultural production have tended to attribute the slower growth and sometimes food deficits to a cocktail of factors among them are availability of adequate technology to deal with erratic climatic conditions and varied agro-ecosystems, lack of an agriculturally enabling environment, unfair rules under which agricultural trade internationally takes place and wrong ideologically driven policies. Meanwhile there is also an important role for real estate to play in the fight against poverty in SSA. However, in other parts of the DCs, rural responses to the marginalisation and appropriation consequent on the industrialisation of the agro-food system have ranged from particularistic, aesthetic market niching to more universalist ethical challenges.

Governance and development is another important issue discussed in this volume as the crucial factor for ensuring development is the standard of governance rather than the physical resources. The real issue is not necessarily the paucity of funds; it is the commitment of leadership and quality of governance. The ultimate aim of public governance is service to the people which can be ensured by enforcing transparency, accountability, introducing electoral reforms, establishing credible law enforcement, sensitising the people and implementing effective delivery mechanism. A welfare state is

the ultimate objective of every economy in the world. However economic systems may differ from country to country but the expected end result of every country is to distribute its national wealth equally. Therefore governments should ensure that everyone is involved in the development process. The important thing is that with the right kind of environment, all people can accomplish great feats and would always be part of society.

Moreover the meaning and concept of Intellectual Capital (IC) in the sustainable value creation process is also examined in this volume. Special emphasis will be how SMEs and regions can collaborate on the systematic development of IC as the central resource for global SD. Authors argue that SD depends on the country's capabilities to absorb, apply and create knowledge in the new era of globalisation. Reliance on local ingredients alone is no longer sufficient for sustaining economic development and therefore, access to global knowledge becomes vital for promoting continuity and change.

Meanwhile rapid technological development is moving the world from an Industrial Age to an Information Age. ICTs must be designed and manufactured according to economically sustainable principles; hence, governments are making efforts in relation to digital strategy as a means of embracing technological changes and remaining competitive within a SD context.

The problem of uneven development in the current techno-economic paradigm is also discussed in this volume with DCs striving to enhance their competitiveness in the global economy are faced with fundamental dilemmas. The DCs must participate fully in the global economy, though not as equal partners. *OUTLOOK 2006* also examines how the structure of the capitalist world-system affects the developmental choices of many DCs and the vital role of transportation in the world economy.

The effect of desertification on rural development (both people and land surface) in different parts of the world is also discussed in this volume. Desertification is not just a problem for the DCs, it also threatens countries in Europe and other parts of the developed world which led many European and international institutions to start implementing different strategies, such as rural development measures, to combat desertification.

*OUTLOOK 2006* also highlights the importance of innovation and sustainability as two sides of the same coin on the agendas of business and government. Innovation is the only sustainable source of competitive advantage and sustainability in new products and processes aids market and regulatory acceptance of innovation. The process by which innovation occurs is changing dramatically, with new business models and new technologies being applied. This has major implications for the sustainability agenda, particularly in the way these new models and technologies enable better engagement of sustainability concerns in the innovation process. However given that the importance and degree of international entrepreneurship has remarkably defined a new competitive landscape for international businesses.

In *conclusion*, given the apparently contradictory needs of economic growth and environmental conservation, it comes as no surprise that SD has had such a powerful influence in contemporary discussions on the future of the planet. Several authors in this volume question the possibility that the epistemology of SD could all be wrong and that any interpretation of SD functions as normative ideas. Such a set of normative ideas can function as guidelines for personal actions and as a baseline in terms of which governments, industry, commerce, consumers and citizens can be held accountable for

their actions. However most authors also agree on one major conclusion that we must *think and act both globally and locally*.

It is hoped that the ensemble of papers presented in this volume will help to stimulate debate amongst scholars, researchers and policymakers and you find this volume interesting and thought-provoking.

Finally, we would like to congratulate the authors for their valuable contribution and we are grateful to our track chairs and many reviewers for graciously offering their invaluable comments that have enriched the quality of these papers in this volume and also for making available to us their valuable time and efforts. Our most sincere gratitude goes to all of the keynote speakers and presenters who shared with us their expertise and knowledge.

On behalf of WASD, we would like to thank the Faculty of Economics at the University of Naples and most sincerely Prof. Alfredo Del Monte and his highly professional and dedicated staff for their generosity and full support to the 2006 Conference.

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We are grateful to all members of the conference team for making available to us their valuable time and efforts in organising this conference.

On behalf of WASD, we would like to thank the Faculty of Economics at the University of Naples and most sincerely Professor Alfredo Del Monte and his highly professional and dedicated staff for their generosity and full support to the 2006 Conference.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the Istituto Banco Napoli-Fondazione and the Institute of Civil Engineers, UK for the conference.

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We are grateful to our track chairs and many reviewers for graciously offering their invaluable comments that have enriched the quality of the papers in this volume and also for making available to us their valuable time and efforts.

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