

# CHAPTER 1

## **Introduction**

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### **1.1 THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

The World Commission for the Environment and Development released a report titled “Our Common Future” in 1987 (Brundtland, 1987). The concept of sustainable development was described in this report as “development that meets current needs without compromising future generations’ ability to fulfil their own needs” (Imperatives, 1987). The importance of sustainable development as one of the most critical matters for international policies was also acknowledged in the United Nations Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the World Summit in 2002. Generally, the idea of sustainable development is concise in which the future should be a better, safer and healthier place than the present. The idea can be reflected through the three basic dimensions presented in relation to sustainable development including environmental, social and economic.

In recent years, the notion of sustainable development is becoming increasingly common. One of the most frequently

debated topics in the notion of sustainable development is the world's present environmental issues, such as energy security, air and water pollution, waste disposal and management, and, most critically, climate change. This is because many studies have presented that climate change, for example, is accountable for a broad extent of severe impacts such as glaciers loss, sea-level rise, droughts as well as extreme weather events such as floods, hurricane, heat waves and storms (Zachariadis, 2016). Prior to these environmental concerns, a proactive approach such as environmental sustainability has been proposed and discussed to safeguarding ecosystems for future generations while conserving the finite natural resources, allowing organisations and communities to improve their environmental performance and subsequently progress towards sustainable development trajectory.

Apart from environmental protection, the economic dimension of sustainable development provides incentives and means for income distribution, equitable opportunity, investments and finances for environmental maintenance and restoration (Solow, 2014). Economic sustainability aims to create prolonged economic development that is free of environmental and social concerns through equitable and efficient resource distribution (Ogunmakinde et al., 2022). According to Atkinson et al. (2014), economic sustainability strives for a market-based economic system that may provide growth and welfare for all, resulting in poverty mitigation and employment while preserving corporate responsibility. Circular economy, for example, is commonly regarded as a sustainable economic model for fostering sustainable development by decoupling environmental pressure caused by economic development (Brueel et al., 2019). Circular economy has recently been suggested as a latest development approach aimed at resolving the conflict

between fast economic development and a scarcity of energy and raw materials (Christis et al., 2019).

Another pressing issue in the sustainable development trajectory is the social concern. The social dimension of sustainable development guarantees that both tangible and less tangible human needs are fulfilled and that social justice is upheld (Ogunmakinde et al., 2022). It also emphasises equity within human populations and between current and future generations as well as security, life expectancy, education, good health, quality of life and well-being (Fleuret & Atkinson, 2007). While environmental sustainability focuses on living within natural resource constraints, social sustainability focuses on living in ways that are healthy and satisfying for individuals and communities. This involves meeting material, social and emotional needs, evading behaviours that lead to emotional discomfort and poor health, and ensuring that the social elements such as communities and families, cultural beliefs, knowledge base and human diversity that contribute to a thriving and prospering human society are not destroyed. In simpler terms, social sustainability entails addressing the requirements for human well-being (Rogers et al., 2012).

Over the last decades, it is common practice for decision-makers to focusing on the environmental and economic dimension of sustainability, while the social dimension of sustainability, on the other hand, was integrated late into debates on developing sustainability (Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008). Despite the fact that the Commission identifies social sustainability as an essential dimension of sustainable development, scientists, decision-makers, researchers and organizations frequently overlook it (Pfeffer, 2010). Missimer et al. (2017), highlighted that a lack of focus to social sustainability is due to a variety of practical and theoretical obstacles, including