

United Nations Division for Sustainable Development Encyclopedia Article

United Nations Division for Sustainable Development

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United Nations Division for Sustainable Development

This United Nations division serves as the secretariat, or the research staff, of the UN Commission on **Sustainable Development**, whose representatives meet periodically to develop policies for sustainable development in 40 countries. The division comprises 30 program officers working in specific sectors: health, human settlements, freshwater resources, toxic **chemicals**, hazardous wastes, solid wastes, and radioactive wastes. According to André Vasilyev, First Officer, it prepares studies and analytical reports and conducts research to support the work of the Commission. It also measures the progress of and makes recommendations for development programs. The division's stated mission is to contribute to sustainable development worldwide by working to implement Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Forest Principles (a United Nations statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, **conservation**, and sustainable development of all types of forests), and the Global Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The division carries out multi-year work programs on sustainable development indicators, changing consumption and production patterns, and the transfer of environmentally sustainable technology.

The Commission was established in 1992 as an adjunct to Agenda 21, the plan of action for environmental sustainability adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. Its charge is to ensure that decisions made at UNCED are carried out at national, regional and international levels, and to further international cooperation and decision-making on these issues.

The full Commission meets once a year. Ad hoc working groups meet periodically to address specific issues, including trade and environmental development, consumption patterns, financial resources, and technology transfer. Open-ended working groups address such issues as integrated management of land resources, forests, combating **desertification**, sustainable mountain development, **sustainable agriculture**, rural development, and biological diversity.

In recent years, the Commission has examined numerous strategies to promote sustainable development: trading debt for sustainable development, creating environmental user charges for air transport, implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification, and developing tools for integrated land management. In the spring of 1997, the full commission met to conduct a five-year review of the results of UNCED.

Resources

Organizations

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