



Council

Strategic commitment to “sustainable development”

Compiled

DVC: IPPC working in collaboration with the Director:

Technology and Innovation and Manager: SD

Date

8 August 2012

Revised 21 Aug 2012 after contributions from FC and Senate

Recommendations

For consideration and approval

Sustainable development as a global concept

1 CUT’s engagements and commitments to sustainable development are located in a wider national and international context. Like many others, CUT shares the United Nation’s commitments and views, which can be described as follows.

- The commitment to improve inter-generational justice: It would be neither prudent nor just if the current human generation pursues its development aspirations in a manner that limits the options of subsequent generations.
- The commitment to improve intra-generational justice: In advancing inter-generation justice, the current human generation must acknowledge and respond to three inter-connected challenges. Firstly and based on alarming current environmental degradation trends, the current generation must act to mitigate and possibly reverse the rate of degradation. Secondly and because of the increasing global levels of socio-economic-and-environment interdependence, the environmental degradation mitigation and reverse commitment requires an equally globally coordinated effort. Thirdly and because of the wide global socio-economic development differentials between regions and countries, the socio-economic development aspirations and models of practice must change without adversely affecting the ability to reduce the legitimate socio-economic development aspirations generally but more specifically, those of the lesser

developed countries and regions. To produce this outcome, we need urgent global cooperation and collaboration to tackle the difficult task of modifying or changing our development aspirations and models of practice.

Based on these views, *sustainable development is defined as human development that uses, consumes and conserves environmental and other resources in such a way that it meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

2 This global political consensus was forged through a protracted consultation process that started on 22 December 1989 when United Nations General Assembly called for a global meeting that would devise strategies to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation "in the context of increased national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries." In response to this mandate the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was convened, also known as the Earth Summit, and was held from 3 to 14 June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This conference adopted a broadly defined global agenda, Agenda for the 21st century (abbreviated as Agenda 21), described above. The Earth Summit also adopted 27 principles which will underpin and support this global agenda, see Annexure 1 and also identified cooperative and collaborative progress in science, technology transfer, education, international institutions and financial mechanisms as the core elements of this global effort.

3 In support of Agenda 21, the United Nations General Assembly on 18 September 2000 also adopted the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) which essentially defines a set of collaborative and cooperative development targets that would ease some of the more significant socio-economic differentials alluded to before. The MDGs aims and targets are:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger:

- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, especially women and young people.
- Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people suffering hunger.

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education.

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women.

Goal 4: Reduce child mortality.

Goal 5: Improve maternal health.

- Achieve, by 2015 universal access to reproductive health.

Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

- By 2015 has halted and reversed the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- Achieve, by 2010, universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment to all who need it.

- Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.

Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability.

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
- Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.
- Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
- By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development.

- Address the special needs of the least developed countries, landlocked countries and small island developing states.
- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable non-discriminatory trading and financial system.
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt.
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication.

4 The MDGs was adopted by the Earth Summit 2002 held between 2 to 11 September 2002 in Johannesburg where the conference theme was "A new deal". The Earth Summit 2012 or also referred to as Rio+20 was held between 20 and 22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro under the theme "The future we want".

CUT's general commitment and position

5 CUT's commitment and position on sustainable development is informed or underpinned by the following context specifics arising from its location as well as its nature.

6 **As a public institution in the Republic of South Africa:** At a global level CUT's commitment and position is informed by the commitments and positions of the Republic of South Africa (RSA). In terms of prevailing Higher Education Policy the institution is obliged, among others, to support our national commitments and development aspirations as well as make mission-aligned contributions to our nation's realization of these commitments and/or aspirations. With reference to the specific Agenda 21 as well as the MDGs commitments of the RSA, CUT can make significant contributions in science, technology transfer and education by working cooperatively

and collaboratively with national sister institutions as well as sister institutions across the globe or with any institution or agency of our choosing and who seeks cooperation and collaboration under the enabling principles, frameworks and mechanisms agreed to by the UN. In this regard, CUT will give special priority and preference for sister institutions in countries or regions which has multilateral and/or bilateral cooperative development agreements with the RSA.

Also at a global level, CUT recognizes that standards of ecological impact in the production of goods and the delivery of services have increasingly become currency of economic competitiveness. In some regional economic markets, especially Europe, this is already an economic reality. Our contributions to reducing the ecological impact of our regional and national economic productive capacities are therefore also significant material national economic positioning contributions.

At a national level CUT acknowledges that all its sustainable development commitments, especially those which would advance our national attainment of the national MDG's, should also be contributions that could advance the improving of human rights guaranteed within our Constitution. CUT also recognizes that accelerated socio-economic development is pivotal for supporting the enhancement of our actual human rights experiences and the accompanying socio-political pressure could shift the balance between "socio-economic development at any cost" and "improved sustainable socio-economic development". Our committed actions in support of advancing and thereby legitimizing sustainable development must therefore be both effective and fast.

7 **As a public university-of-technology:** At an institutional level three decision-making guidelines would underpin CUT specific commitments.

- Firstly, CUT will give special attention to the development and transfer of tangible contributions to enhance global, regional, national and local sustainability. The focus of these contributions would be to appropriately modify our curriculum so that staff and students who participate therein are supported and empowered to advance sustainable development, on the one hand and on the other, contribute to the development, modification and transfer of appropriate technologies required to advance the implementation of increasingly more sustainable socio-economic development practices.
- Secondly, CUT will also give special attention to improve the sustainability of its own resource consumption and conservation practices.

- Thirdly and going beyond CUT's King III¹ commitments, the institution have a continuing governance and management commitment to improve its sustainability as both a going-concern and an university-of-technology. In this regard, CUT's governance and management preferences would be for risk-mitigation solutions that are affordable, durable, transferable to other sectors of society while at the same time reducing the institution's and other solution-users ecological footprint.

8 **An integrated approach to advance and support sustainable development progress:** As at a global level, CUT also recognizes the need for an integrated approach to advancing sustainable development as both an organizational and academic commitment and informed by its core values of customer service, integrity, diversity, innovation and excellence. In addition, CUT needs to improve the targeting and management of its partnerships as well as partnership projects with respect to their ability to improving the effectiveness and realization pace of our organizational and academic development priorities. In this regard, CUT acknowledges the following integrated development outcome aspects to realize its aspiration of excellence in sustainable development.

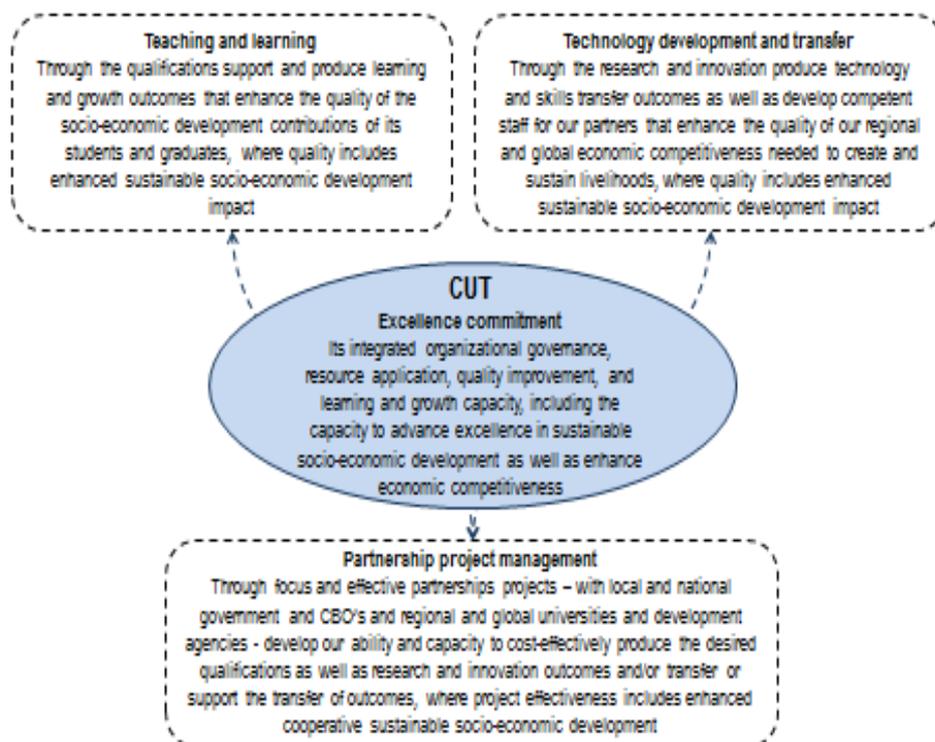


Diagram 1: Important elements of CUT's integrated commitment to advance excellence in sustainable socio-economic development

¹ The King III report on corporate governance, Sept 2009: Moving from a risk mitigation perspective, this report sets standards for improved sustainable governance practices for organizations, institutions and enterprises. Key aspects covered in the standards are improvements to the integrity of governance oversight generally and more specifically in those areas where the organization have limited risk control, e.g. over organizational data and records where control and integrity are within the IT systems used for the storage and retrieval of data and records as well as IT systems service providers.

CUT's methodology commitment in advancing excellence in sustainable development

9 As explained, CUT's commitment to advancing sustainable development is a transformation commitment because the intended outcome is to stimulate, encourage and support changes in individual as well as organizational values and practices. As such, our commitment will be consistent to our existing project-based transformation methodology which among others also recommends the following signature stages of change:

- Creating an individual and collective awareness for the need to change;
- Stimulating, encouraging and supporting individuals and/or small groups to select reachable but sustainable targets for their change commitments; and
- Providing moral, advisory, administrative, logistical and material support to realize the change commitments. The range of support would obviously be limited by the budget as well as assistance that could additionally be leveraged through partnership projects.

10 Insofar as it is both possible and feasible, the following dimensions would be key to measuring CUT's excellence in sustainable development:

- Firstly, while we recognize these important enabling change stages, CUT implementation would also have to realize tangible resource efficiency benefits for itself as well as its students, staff and community, on the one hand and on the other, realize these efficiency gains in tangible material benefits for its students, staff and community. In short, the projects to be initiated and launched to support change must make economic sense by producing sustainable tangible socio-economic benefits.
- Secondly, because CUT is a university of technology dedicated to producing social and technology innovations in support of socio-economic development, some of the projects to be initiated and launched to support change must advance the production of social and technology innovations that also advances and supports improved sustainable socio-economic development paths for the institution, its students, staff and community.
- Thirdly, our commitment to sustainable development overall must support and advance increasingly more sustainable socio-economic development and employment.

11 Consistent with the cooperation and collaboration precepts, the primary method for leveraging these changes would be done through selected partnership projects that are managed consistent to the Partnership Policy. In this regard it is important to note that no changes are needed to Vision 2020. What would however be needed would be leadership, especially executive management leadership, to ensure that contributions to the advancement of

sustainable development receive greater preference and support in future partnership projects and that sustainable development progress are adequately supported by the performance management system.

12 While the purpose of this document is not to serve as a plan but as a consensus-for-action, our existing national commitment compels CUT to provide some initial guidelines for such actions. In planning contributions to the advancement and support for sustainable development there is no need to review or adjust our institutional planning framework or our commitment to the development of rolling three-year-plans.

13 The following sustainable development outcome priorities are only provided to kick-start, so to say, the first three-year rolling plan by providing some initial measures and targets aligned to those aspects of the MDG which could be relevant to Vision 2020 as well as our current outcome priorities.

<i>Expected outcomes</i>	<i>Measures</i>	<i>Targets by 2014 based on 2011</i>
Improved awareness	(1) Number of staff and students who attended “Induction in sustainable development”	800
	(2) Number of staff and students who have participated more than three times in the monthly “clean campus” activities	200
	(3) 1 st offering of Sustainable Development as a topic under the future 1 st year core curriculum or as theme across the 1 st year curriculum ²	2015
	(4) Number of feeder schools with active on-going clean-school and waste management programmes	4
Improved waste management	(5) Percentage volume of annual waste being reused in recycling or as feedstock for other entrepreneurial activities	20%
	(6) Number of annual student bursaries funded from improved waste management income	5
	(7) Improve annual consumption of goods and services with 10% or more “recycled content” by rand-value	1%
Reduced non-renewable and increased renewal energy	(8) Percentage reduction in non-renewable CUT energy consumption	1%
	(9) Percentage increase of renewable CUT energy	1%

² Senate considered an extra credit-bearing module – which was proposed in the draft- as ill-advisable.

consumption	consumption	
Improved socio-economic development	(10) Annual total remuneration income of improved sustainable employment opportunities (measured in terms of at least 10% reduced use of non-renewal materials and/or environmental pollution and/or producing goods and services advancing sustainable development)	R 600 000

14 As a transformation project, CUT will make an initial investment to provide administrative and logistical support for the different projects as well as project start-up investment. As with all such strategic development initiatives the long-term aim would be to reduce project reliance on CUT investment while at the same time seeking project investment from other sources. To achieve this long-term position, CUT would review its investment in three year cycles, with the next review to be conducted in 2015.

ANNEXURE 1: Principles underpinning and supporting the UN's Agenda 21

- **Principle 1:** Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
- **Principle 2:** States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.
- **Principle 3:** The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.
- **Principle 4:** In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it.
- **Principle 5:** All States and all people shall cooperate in the essential task of eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in order to decrease the disparities in standards of living and better meet the needs of the majority of the people of the world.
- **Principle 6:** The special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed and those most environmentally vulnerable, shall be given special priority. International actions in the field of environment and development should also address the interests and needs of all countries.
- **Principle 7:** States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.
- **Principle 8:** To achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies.
- **Principle 9:** States should cooperate to strengthen endogenous capacity-building for sustainable development by improving scientific understanding through exchanges of scientific and technological knowledge, and by enhancing the development, adaptation, diffusion and transfer of technologies, including new and innovative technologies.
- **Principle 10:** Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.
- **Principle 11:** States shall enact effective environmental legislation. Environmental standards, management objectives and priorities should reflect the environmental and developmental context to which they apply. Standards applied by some countries may be inappropriate and of unwarranted economic and social cost to other countries, in particular developing countries.
- **Principle 12:** States should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system that would lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, to better address the problems of environmental degradation. Trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on

international trade. Unilateral actions to deal with environmental challenges outside the jurisdiction of the importing country should be avoided. Environmental measures addressing transboundary or global environmental problems should, as far as possible, be based on an international consensus.

- **Principle 13:** States shall develop national law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. States shall also cooperate in an expeditious and more determined manner to develop further international law regarding liability and compensation for adverse effects of environmental damage caused by activities within their jurisdiction or control to areas beyond their jurisdiction.
- **Principle 14:** States should effectively cooperate to discourage or prevent the relocation and transfer to other States of any activities and substances that cause severe environmental degradation or are found to be harmful to human health.
- **Principle 15:** In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- **Principle 16:** National authorities should endeavour to promote the internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments, taking into account the approach that the polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution, with due regard to the public interest and without distorting international trade and investment.
- **Principle 17:** Environmental impact assessment, as a national instrument, shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and are subject to a decision of a competent national authority.
- **Principle 18:** States shall immediately notify other States of any natural disasters or other emergencies that are likely to produce sudden harmful effects on the environment of those States. Every effort shall be made by the international community to help States so afflicted.
- **Principle 19:** States shall provide prior and timely notification and relevant information to potentially affected States on activities that may have a significant adverse transboundary environmental effect and shall consult with those States at an early stage and in good faith.
- **Principle 20:** Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.
- **Principle 21:** The creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all.
- **Principle 22:** Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.
- **Principle 23:** The environment and natural resources of people under oppression, domination and occupation shall be protected.
- **Principle 24:** Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development. States shall therefore respect international law providing protection for the environment in times of armed conflict and cooperate in its further development, as necessary.
- **Principle 25:** Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.
- **Principle 26:** States shall resolve all their environmental disputes peacefully and by appropriate means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.
- **Principle 27:** States and people shall cooperate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfillment of the principles embodied in this Declaration and in the further development of international law in the field of sustainable development