

**NASSD Preface**

**Northern Areas, Pakistan**

**Strategy**  
**for**  
**Sustainable Development**

**(NASSD)**

**Northern Areas Administration**  
**Ministry of Kashmir and Northern affairs (KANA)**  
**Government of Pakistan**

**With the assistance of**

**IUCN – THE WORLD CONSERVATION UNION**  
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## Preface

The recent World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg South Africa in August/September 2002 was controversial for many participants because there were no major new commitments of overseas development assistance, as least with respect to the two previous years of rising global expectations. However, some of the achievements that did emerge are centered on a broader understanding that more effective implementation of many sustainable development and other agreements, particularly some of the most recent Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) concerning biodiversity, climate change, desertification, hazardous waste and chemical pollutants, was critically necessary for global sustainable development. This certainly includes a need for better coordination among recipient countries and the development of improved capacity to undertake activities for mutual regional benefit.

It is also clear that many of the international instruments for improved global environmental governance that have been established since the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (UNCED or the “Earth Summit) in 1992 have achieved limited success. Therefore, we must make better use of the investments that have already been made towards achievement of the Rio objectives and its implementation manifesto (“Agenda 21”); we must improve the effectiveness of the future international response to environmental issues; and we must ensure that all actors – in governments, the private sector and within civil society organizations – have the capacity to fully participate in the global movement for sustainable development.

With this year’s World Summit on Sustainable Development there was an opportunity to evaluate and build upon the last decade of experience. The emerging recognition that we must redouble the international efforts to achieve sustainable development clearly includes an explicit understanding that developing global capacity to implement the lessons learned since 1992 must be a first priority in the years to come. Within the community of bilateral and multilateral agencies (that progressively and aggressively undertake the responsibility to do sustainable development SDC and NORAD have an opportunity to exercise a significant new leadership role. They both have adapted the opportunity and the responsibility to make this a “decade of doing”.

Rather than develop new agreements, therefore, additional resources have been committed to further the successful implementation of existing international agreements and the application of these in Pakistan. In other words improved human capacity within Pakistan is the key to future success – hence the focus on “capacity development” that has emerged in this and similar reports.

It should be stressed that this focus on capacity development – in itself – is not new. Indeed however, the need to improve the human condition, to focus on sustainable human development, is increasingly urgent. If there is a cautionary tale here though, it seems to be that many other bilateral and multilateral donor agencies seem to be retrenching from environmental programming, often due to more immediate global demands on resources, as if such programming was somehow an antithesis of sustainable development. While of course nothing can be more misconstrued. We should be even more cognizant that the human poverty-environmental degradation cycle is more intertwined than ever – and the mountains of Northern Pakistan (indeed all of Central Asia) are at the nexus of this argument. More commitment to sustainability is needed, not less! We remain exceptionally grateful that Switzerland and Norway are cognizant of both the global problem and the reality of the need to stay engaged in the Northern Areas.

However it has very recently been pointed out by many observers (often unsympathetic to the core environmental issues) that the logic of the preceding paragraph now pre-dates WSSD. They correctly point out that there must be a new stress on a “third” generation of “environmental rights as being fundamental to human development. Such rights must entail claims for clear accountability, responsibility, and effective participation. In this case the duty bearers such as the sovereign governments, the respective civil societies and the world community in general, which are often very adept at setting standards, but have remained poor at implementation and even poorer at monitoring. There is a clear need for observable and measurable progress towards sustainability. Thus not only is implementation of the many development instruments required, but effective monitoring is crucial. Both activities of course also require financial resources,

In addition to improved monitoring capabilities, many more effective institutions are required to settle disputes and conflicts that will inevitably arise. Capacity enhancement is the key issue but a series of additional national and international institutions and commitments are needed. These must be responsible for the implementation of all international development agreements, (but especially the MEAs) which many agencies mistakenly identify as only sectoral issues, when indeed they are absolutely central to sustainable human development.

It is also critically important that we acknowledge that this work, although conceived many years ago, the NASSD is largely being completed during the United Nations International Year of the Mountains (IYM) 2002 and lesser known by some it is also a year for the celebration and promotion of Ecotourism. Both UN “years” have particular importance for the Northern Areas of Pakistan and indeed several dignitaries from government and civil society will be attending the International Summit on Mountains in the Kyrghyz Republic in October 2002. Although far lesser known than the WSSD in South Africa the IYM Summit has the potential to address more applied matters of Mountain Sustainable Development (MSD) and what can be accomplished in practical and realistic terms to promote greater global (and donor) awareness of many important issues. Similarly Pakistan was represented at the World Tourism event in Quebec City, Canada earlier in 2002, where issues of sustainable development, responsible tourism, heritage conservation and the promotion of ecotourism as new alternatives to mass-marketed conventional approaches were all addressed.

Unfortunately for all of these efforts and for many of us as individuals, world events beginning, in the media at least on Sept 11 2001, have radically altered the global development agenda. This situation, simply put, is a reality we must adjust to – and move onwards to the more general objective of equitable and sustainable global development.

Even as these words are written however, financial commitments from many developed countries are dwindling in real terms as the world community is “distracted” by the unilateral focus of the USA (in particular) of the consequences of the immoral, unethical and grossly inadequate distribution of the benefits of global natural resources – and of course the terrorist movements that have emerge as a result.

For the purposes of NASSD, thankfully, the governments of Switzerland and Norway have remained committed and focussed on the long term objectives of this exceptionally important work.

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Gilgit, Pakistan, December 2002**

